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GAMEFAN

NEXT GENERATION VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2
FEBRUARY 1997



MARIO KART 64
EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE!
COMMAND & CONQUER
FIGHTERS MEGAMIX
STREET FIGHTER III
MEGAMAN 8
SOULBLADE
TEKKEN 3

EXCLUSIVE UPDATE
VMX RACING

NINTENDO 64
KI GOLD
SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE
CRUIS'N USA

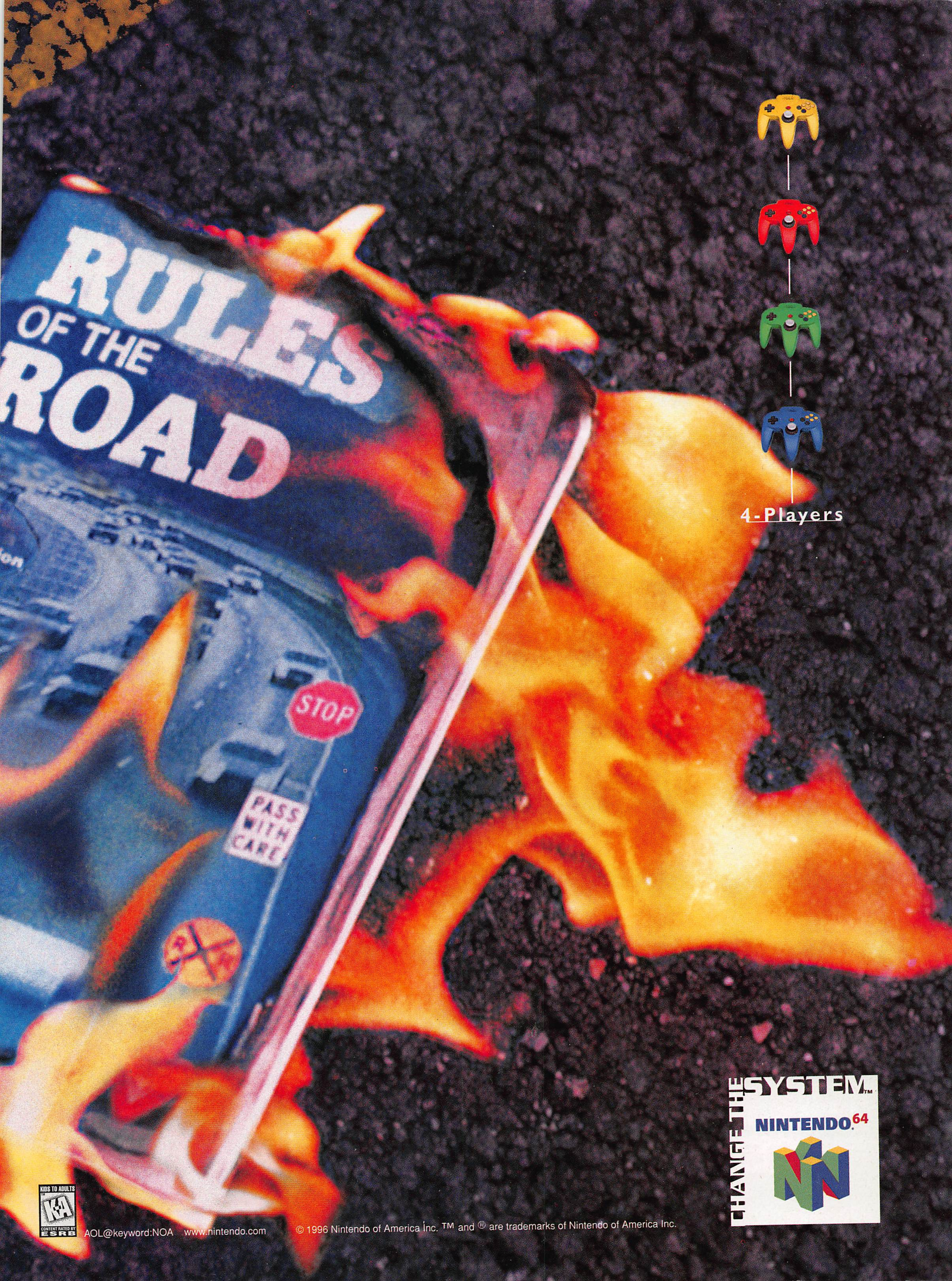
SHOSHINKAI SPECIAL REPORT
STARFOX 64
BLAST CORPS
ZELDA 64
YOSHI 64
AND MORE!

PLUS:
DOOM 64
AN IN DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAMS/MIDWAY!

5th ANNUAL MEGAWARDS!
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NINTENDO 64 SPORTS: NBA HANGTIME & ST. ANDREWS GOLF

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With Nintendo 64, you get 360° of total control. With Super Mario Kart 64, you lose it. It's a 4-player free-4-all that breaks every law in the book.
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VOL. 3
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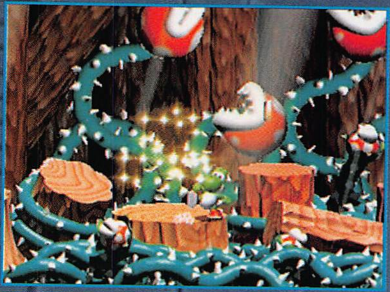
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COVER PG. 79



MARIO KART 64



"Carnage runs rampant..." ★★★★
— Next Generation
"[Kain's] plot is complex — and gory — enough to satisfy even the most die-hard RPG player."
— Electronic Gaming Monthly
"Kain is a powerful, persuasive and exciting new character..."
— Game Informer
"the gaming equivalent of Braveheart."
— Next Generation
KEEP THIS GAME OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN
— P.S.X.
GORY COMBAT ACTION
Brimming with 170 horrifying enemies and 21 demented spells — each with a unique bloody graphic.
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PLAYSTATION/SNK'S "KING OF FIGHTERS" TOURNAMENT



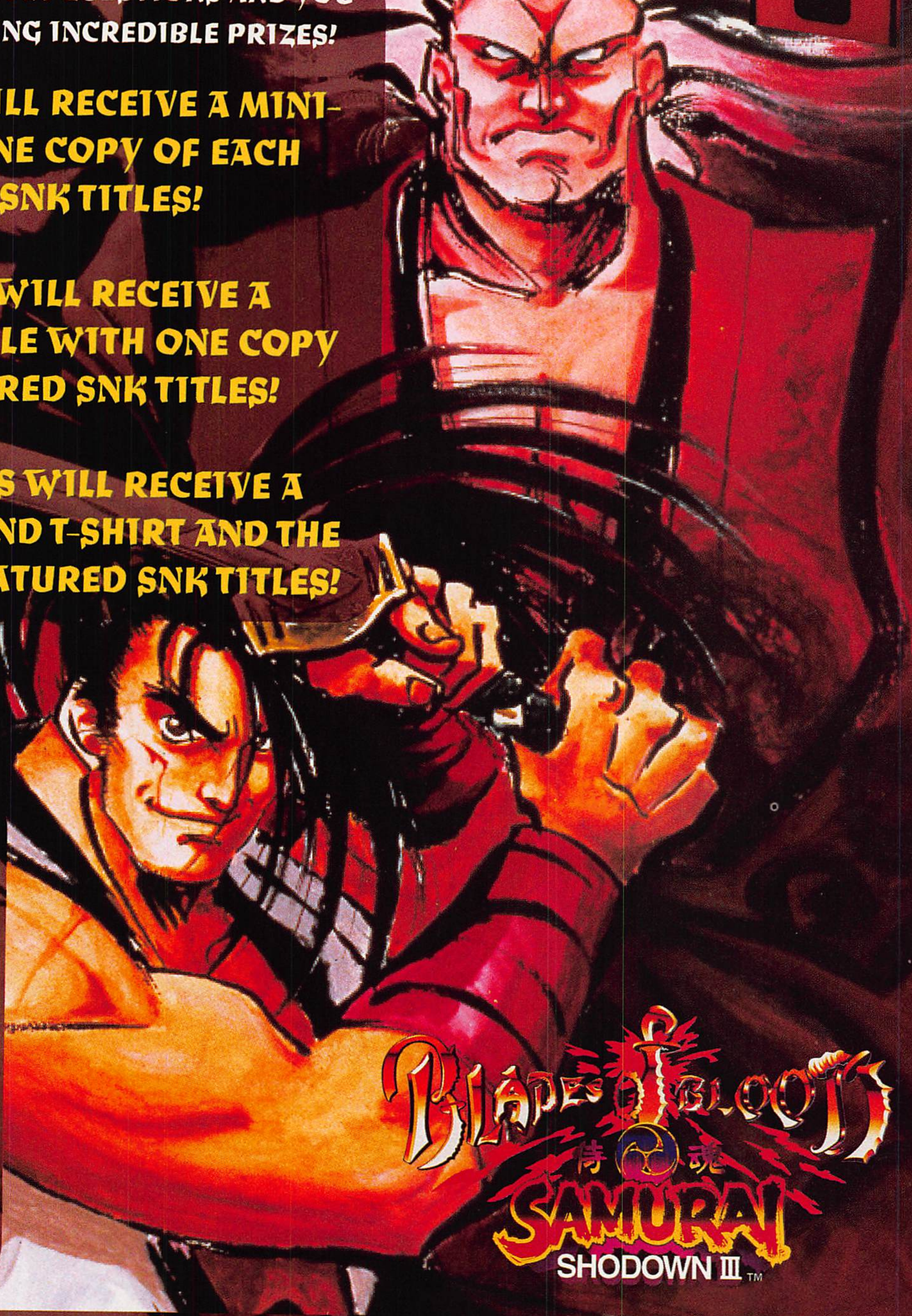
WIN AN AWESOME MINI-ARCADE SYSTEM! COMPLETE WITH 3 CLASSIC SNK FIGHTING GAMES!

JUST ANSWER 10 OF THE 15 SNK TRIVIA QUESTIONS AND YOU COULD WIN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING INCREDIBLE PRIZES!

1 GRAND PRIZE WINNER WILL RECEIVE A MINI-ARCADE SYSTEM WITH ONE COPY OF EACH OF THE 3 FEATURED SNK TITLES!

1 FIRST PRIZE WINNER WILL RECEIVE A PLAYSTATION GAME CONSOLE WITH ONE COPY OF EACH OF THE 3 FEATURED SNK TITLES!

5 SECOND PRIZE WINNERS WILL RECEIVE A PLAYSTATION BRAND HAT AND T-SHIRT AND THE CHOICE OF ONE OF THE 3 FEATURED SNK TITLES!



SAMURAI SHODOWN® III: BLADES OF BLOOD ™

1. What are the names of the 2 "moods" of the character that will determine which set of moves you will have?
2. What are the 2 animals that Nakoruru can fight with?
3. What character can fight with an animal or without?
4. What do characters gain in "UPPER GRADE" mode that makes up for the inability to defend?
5. What word did the "Shodown" in Samurai Shodown III replace from the original name used in Japan?

BLADES OF BLOOD
SAMURAI SHODOWN III™

1. No purchase Necessary to Enter. To enter, said a postcard (no envelopes please) with you names, age, address, phone number and the answers to as many of the trivia questions as possible (answers must be numbered to coordinate with questions) to SNK PlayStation Sweepstakes, c/o Linzee International, 1306 Old County Road, Belmont, CA 94002. Entries must be received no later than 3/1/97. Sony Computer Entertainment America (the "Sponsor") is not responsible for lost, late mutilated, illegible, incomplete or misdirected entries. 2. Prizes: One (1) Grand Prize winner will receive a mini-arcade system with cartridges for each of three featured SNK titles (approximate retail value of $2,200.00). One (1) First Prize winner will receive a PlayStation game console and copies of each of the three featured SNK titles (approximate retail value of $350.00). Five (5) Second Prize winners will each receive a PlayStation brand hat and t-shirt and one of the three featured SNK PlayStation titles, at winners choice (approximate retail value of $80.00). Sponsor reserve the right to substitute prize of equal value if prize is unavailable. Prizes are non-transferable and no substitutions allowed. 3. Winners: Winners will be determined by a single random drawing of all valid entries, with at least ten (10) of the trivia questions answered correctly, received by the Sponsors, whose decisions are final. Drawing to be held on or about 3/5/97. Winners shall be notified by mail and/or telephone. 4. Odds of Winning Sweepstakes: The odds of winning depend on number of valid entries received. 5. Eligibility: Promotion open to residents of United States only. Return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Winners may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within 7 days of receipt or forfeit prize. If the winner is a minor, then prize will be awarded to parent or legal guardian. By acceptance of prize, winners agree to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Employees of the Sponsor and its parent and affiliated companies and their families are not eligible. Neither the Sponsor nor its affiliates, subsidiaries, division or related companies are responsible for any damages, taxes, or expenses that winners might incur as result of this sweepstakes or receipt of prize. 6. Winners List: To obtain list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to SNK PlayStation Sweepstakes Winners List c/o Linzee International, 1306 Old County Road, Belmont, CA 94002. Requests for winners list must be received by 3/30/97. Allow 4 weeks for delivery of winners list. 7. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law.



TO ENTER THE COMPETITION SIMPLY PRINT YOUR NAME, AGE AND ADDRESS (CITY, STATE AND ZIP) ON A POSTCARD ALONG WITH THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO AT LEAST 10 OF THE SNK TRIVIA QUESTIONS AND SEND IT TO:

PLAYSTATION/SNK'S "KING OF FIGHTERS" TOURNAMENT,
C/O LINZEE INTERNATIONAL,
1306 OLD COUNTY ROAD,
BELMONT CA 94002

THE KING OF FIGHTERS® '95

1. Who is the main character that is shown on the cover of the game?
2. How many boss characters can be played in this game?
3. What 2 new characters made their debut in this game?
4. What was the name of the new feature added in the character selection that allows you to select any characters for your team?
5. The King of Fighters '95 takes characters who were originally from 4 different games. What are the names of those 4 games?

REAL BOUT FATAL FURY™

1. Are the characters Jin and Chin, male or female?
2. What is the name of the boss character that returns for this game?
3. How many lines of fighting are there?
4. What new feature allows characters to win with less power than the opponent?
5. Including Real Bout Fatal Fury, how many games in the Fatal Fury series exist?

ED ZONE

As the 50th issue of GameFan motors off to the printer, I can't help but get a little retrospective. We started GF in late '92 and now, on the brink of '97, the world remote seems to have been pegged on fast forward. Making a video game magazine is a constant effort in an industry that changes like the wind and rarely sleeps.

In four short years, we've seen the rise and fall of 16-bit, the emergence of 32 & 64-bit consoles, and the 3DO, 32X and Virtual Boy come and go (rather abruptly, I might add). Corridor games and 3D adventures have replaced conventional action, polygons have transposed hand-drawn graphics, and (can you believe it?), fighting games are still a hot commodity. I guess it wasn't a fad after all. In '92, Sony was introducing their first ever video games (ahem) and now they sit perched atop the industry with Nintendo and Sega nipping at their heels. I can recall a conversation I had during GF's infancy with Seth Mendelson and Eric Yeo, who at that time were with a hot Virgin team which included David Perry, Tom Tanaka, Tommy Tallarico and countless other talented individuals who have since moved on (which is nothing out of the ordinary, the game industry is really one big game of musical chairs). They were describing to me how, in the future, you'd be able to download games through phone lines to your home PC and someday even the family TV. At the time it sounded like fantasy, yet here we are, playing *Wipeout* at 30fps on-line and site-surfing on Web TV. A lot has happened in four years.

I hope the next four bring as much technological advancement as the last, though it's hard to imagine what the next major step will be. Personally, I'm ready for a holographic fighting game. Yeah, right.



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[WARNING : HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS]
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05

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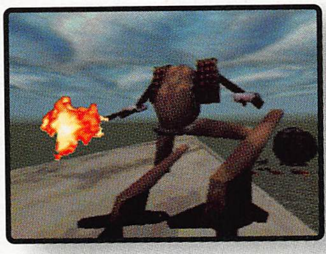
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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

READERS' TOP TEN

1. *Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
2. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
3. *Resident Evil* - PS
4. *Tekken 2* - PS
5. *Pilotwings* - Nintendo[64]
6. *NiGHTS* - Saturn
7. *Final Fantasy III* - SNES
8. *WaveRace* - Nintendo[64]
9. *Street Fighter Alpha* - Saturn
10. *Tobal No. 1* - PS



READERS' MOST WANTED

1. *Zelda* - Nintendo[64]
2. *Resident Evil 2* - PS
3. *Shadows of the Empire* - N[64]
4. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
5. *Tomb Raider* - PS
6. *Mario Kart 64* - N[64]
7. *Cruis'n USA* - Nintendo[64]
8. *Doom* - Nintendo[64]
9. *Donkey Kong Country 3* - SNES
10. *Wayne Gretzky 3D Hockey* - Nintendo[64]





1. *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* - N[64]
2. *Shining the Holy Ark* - Saturn
3. *Fighters Megamix* - Saturn
4. *Mario Kart 64* - N[64]
5. *Shadows of the Empire* - N[64]
6. *Soul Edge* - PS
7. *Rage Racer* - PS
8. *MegaMan 8* - PS
9. *Re-Loaded* - PS
10. *Enemy Zero* - Saturn



1. *Rage Racer* - PS
2. *Soul Edge* - PS
3. *Tekken 2* - PS
4. *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* - N[64]
5. *Doom*[64] - N[64]
6. *Tail of the Sun* - PS
7. *Command & Conquer* - PS
8. *Quake* - PC
9. *Super Mario Kart* - Super NES
10. *Tomb Raider* - PC/PS



1. *Christmas NiGHTS* - Saturn
2. *Shadows of the Empire* - N[64]
3. *Mario Kart 64* - N[64]
4. *Dark Savior* - Saturn
5. *Soul Edge* - PS
6. *Command & Conquer* - PS
7. *Virtua Cop 2* - Saturn
8. *Daytona CCE* - Saturn
9. *Rage Racer* - PS
10. *Super Mario Kart* - Super NES



1. *Enemy Zero* - Saturn
2. *Lunar Silver Star Story* - Saturn
3. *Arc the Lad II* - PS
4. *Wonder Project J2* - N[64]
5. *Command & Conquer* - Saturn
6. *Soul Edge* - PS
7. *Fighting Vipers* - Saturn
8. *Tomb Raider* - PS
9. *Virtua Cop 2*- Saturn
10. *Sakura Taisen* - PS

WIN THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

First Prize:
AN INCREDIBLE GXTV!

Second Prize:
Your choice of one of the Picks of the Month in Viewpoint

Third Prize:
A FREE year of GameFan! The best magazine in the universe!

Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

Congratulations

to last month's winners:

First Prize:
Lisa Golay, Columbus, IN

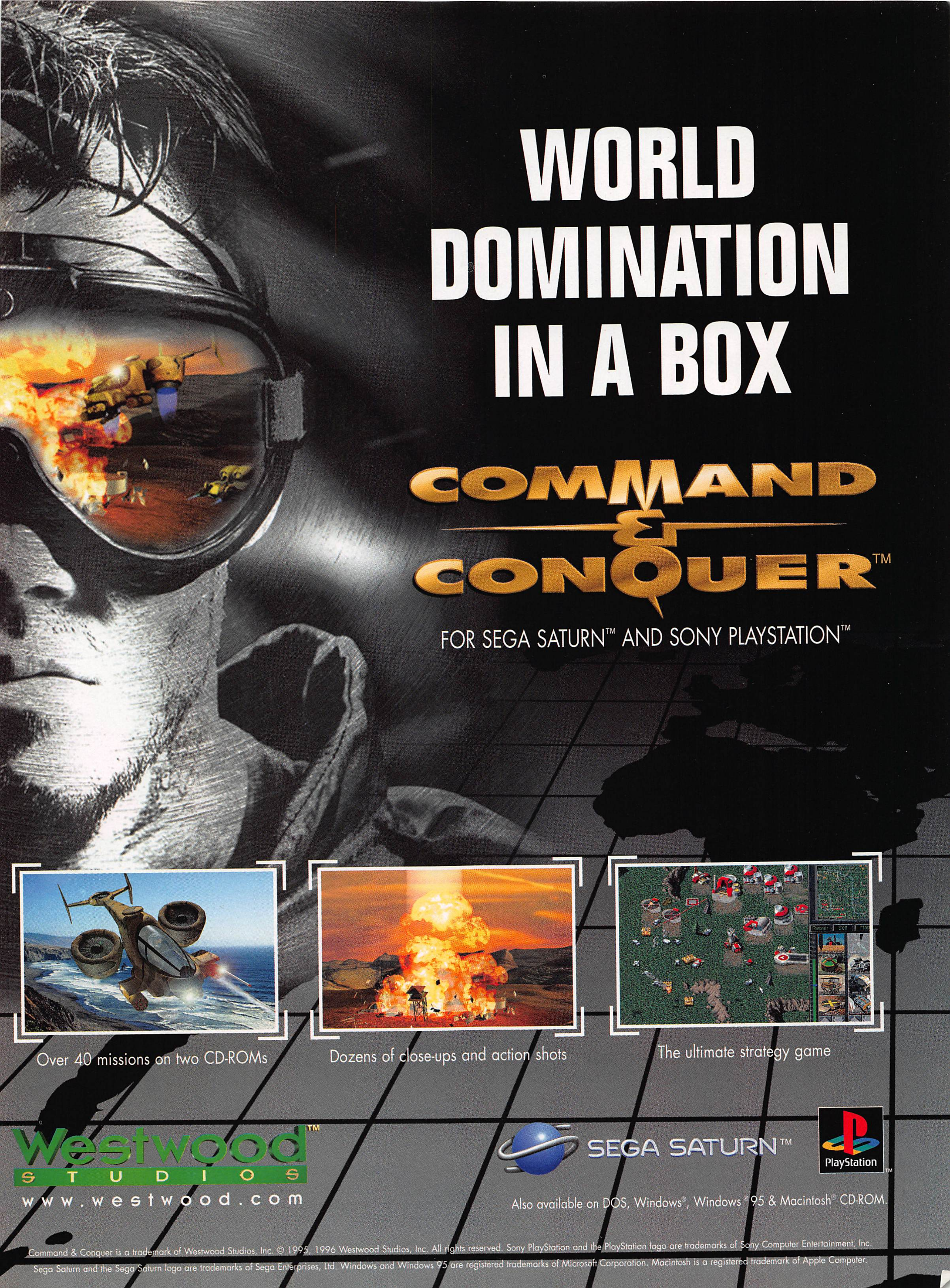
Second Prize:
Matthias Wilhelm, Neu-Ulm, Germany

Third Prize:
Joel Miller, Red Bud, IL

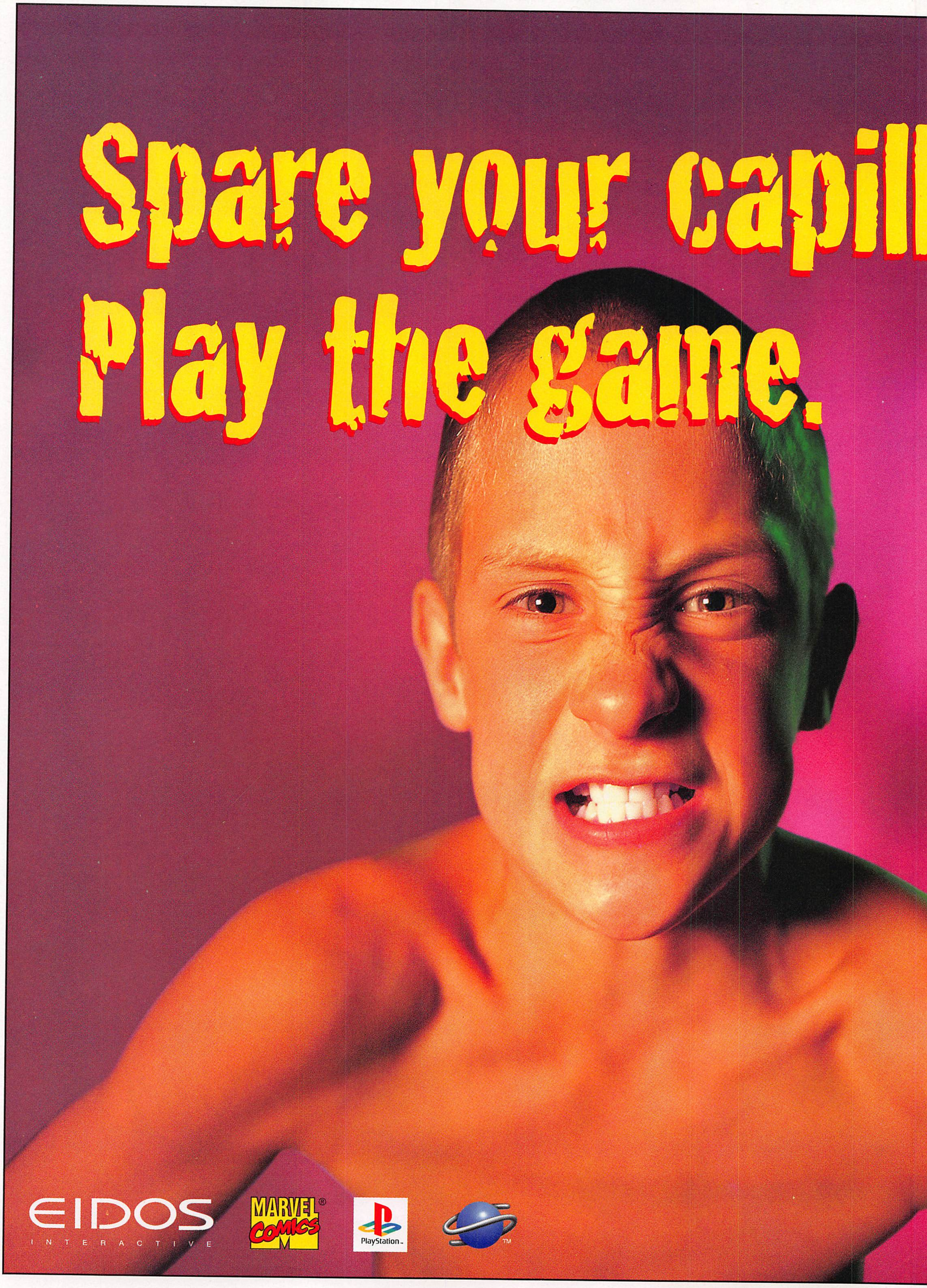


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First Prize! Sega Nomad System!!

Second Prize! Nintendo GameBoy System!!

Third Prize! Free 1 year GameFan Subscription!!

GRAND PRIZE WINNER:

BERNIE LEON, GRANADA HILLS, CALIFORNIA

FIRST PRIZE WINNER:

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SECOND PRIZE WINNER:

J. SEAN McKAY - INTERNET

THIRD PRIZE WINNER:

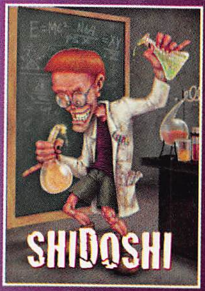
JAMES KING, FALLBROOK , CALIFORNIA

Waka and Chief Hambleton seek the finest cheats, secrets and tips known to humanity, and we need them from YOU!! We'll look over all the codes you send and award a magnificent Grand Prize every single month! Remember, no cheap codes from previously published US magazines! Winners will be drawn each month and displayed in the only place where cheaters prosper. (Current subscribers who win a subscription will receive a one-year extension.)

SEND YOUR CARDS AND LETTERS TO:
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Hocus Pocus
5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

SAMURAI SHOWDOWN 4 NEO•GEO CARTRIDGE UNCENSOR CODE, EXTRA GOODIES!





First Reubus wanted to make a contribution. Now Shidoshi wants a piece of the action... Jeez people! I guess there will be an all-new Hocus coming your way soon! See ya! - Waka & Chief

Uncensor
At the main menu, hold Start, and go into the options screen. Move to exit, press A+B+C+D.

Fatality
While playing, press Back, Forward, Down + Start. Your character will kill himself/herself.

Name Entry
Putting in 'AAA' for your initials will make your character fall over dead.

Charlotte - Splash Gradation variation
While Charlotte is doing her Splash Gradation (weapon breaker), when she draws the star, hold A, B, C, or D. Each button will make her finish the move in a different way.

Galford - Poppy's puppies
Win two rounds perfectly, the second being weaponless. While Galford is doing his win pose, Poppy's puppies will run across the screen.

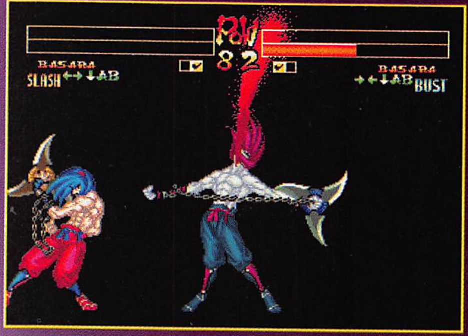
Rimururu - 'Seductive Neck Turning'
While weaponless, when time on the round is almost up, jump up into the air and create the ice platform below you. Time it so that you're still standing on it when the time runs out. When Rimururu falls to the ground, before getting up, she'll lay on the ground for a second and look around.

Trip/cartwheel
While weaponless, run at your opponent and press A+C or B+D.

Shizumaru - Genjuro's frog
When Bust Shizu fights Genjuro, in his second round win pose he will open his umbrella and Genjuro's frog from SS2 will hop out.

Multi-image slash
For his dashing sword thrust, how long you hold the button determines what he does after the first hit. Variations come at 10, 30, 50, and 80 seconds. With the 80 second one, after his thrusts his sword into the opponent, he'll jump into the air, and multiple images of him will come down and hit the opponent.

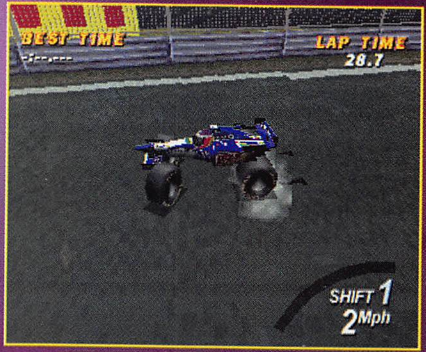
Sogetsu - Control Water Bubbles
After shooting out one of his water bubbles, keep the button you used held down, and using the joystick you can control the bubble slightly.







FORMULA ONE SONY PLAYSTATION BONUS TRACK, BUGGY MODE, BIKE MODE, LAVA TRACK MODE, GIBBERISH MODE



To do these codes, you have to be at the PRACTICE, QUALIFY, and RACE screen. While pressing the following buttons hold SELECT.

BONUS TRACK: - LEFT, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, UP, RIGHT.

MINI BUGGY MODE: - RIGHT, UP, TRIANGLE, LEFT, UP, SQUARE, TRIANGLE.

MINI BIKE MODE: - DOWN, UP, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, RIGHT, UP, SQUARE, TRIANGLE.

LAVA TRACK: - SQUARE, CIRCLE, UP, RIGHT, RIGHT, CIRCLE, X.

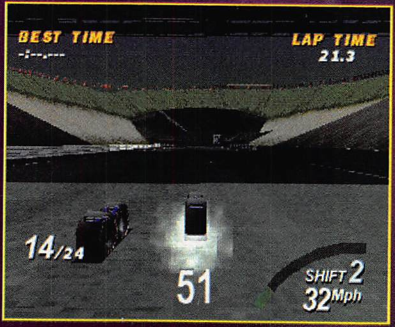
GIBBERISH MODE: - LEFT, CIRCLE, UP, DOWN, DOWN, RIGHT, CIRCLE, SQUARE, SQUARE



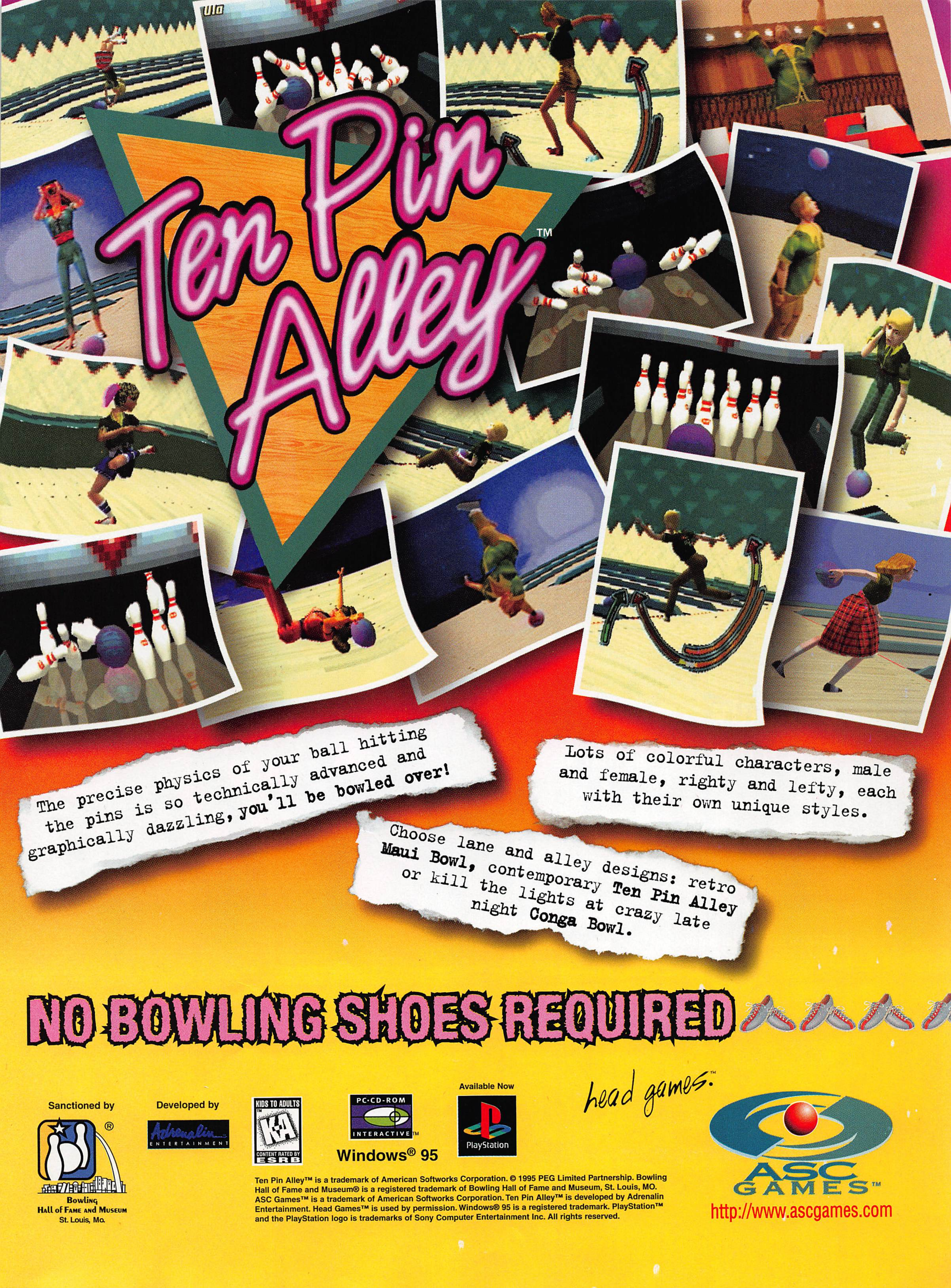
Do the codes at this screen while holding SELECT.

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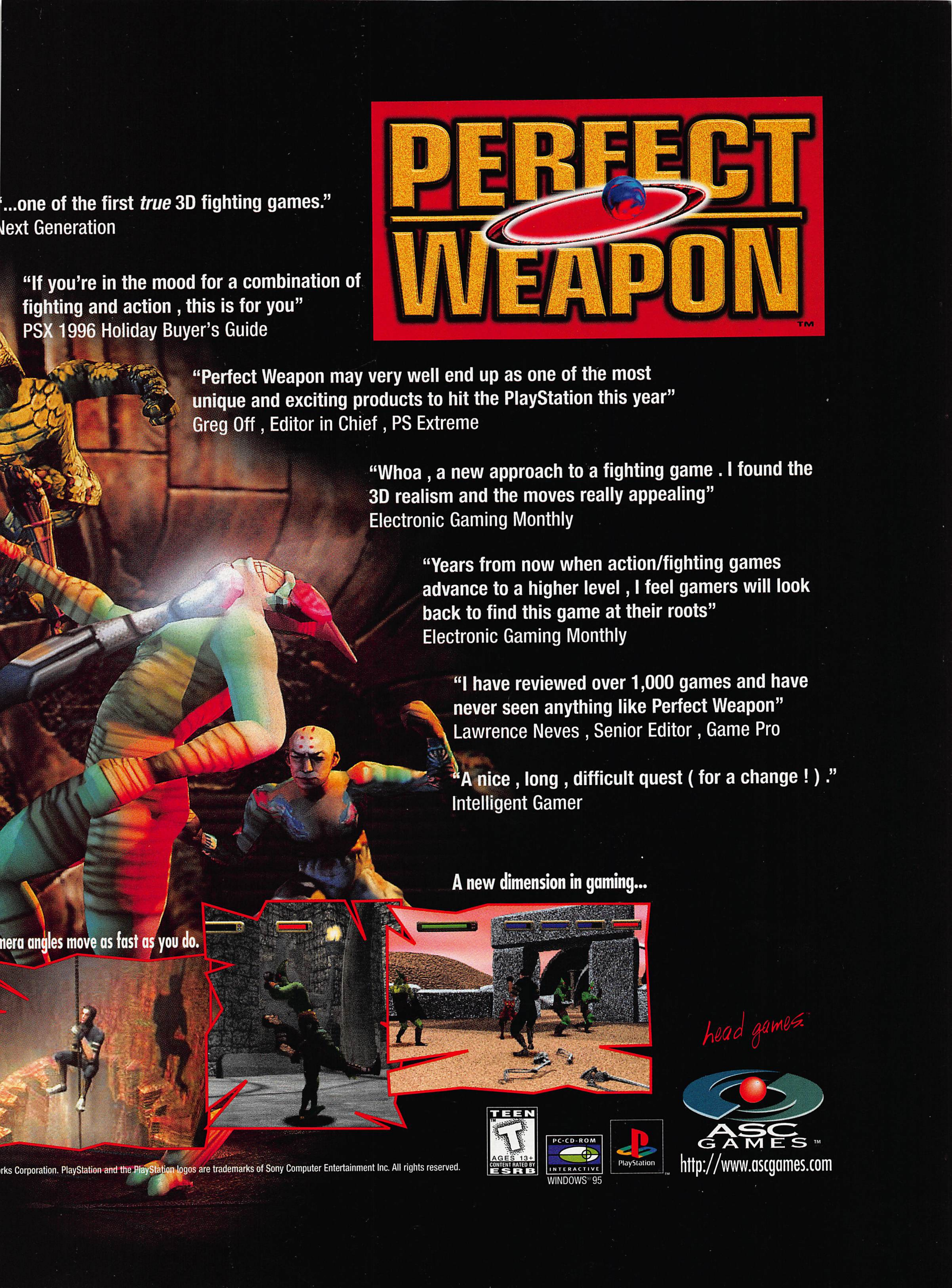




Ten Pin Alley™
The precise physics of your ball hitting the pins is so technically advanced and graphically dazzling, you'll be bowled over!
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Choose lane and alley designs: retro Maui Bowl, contemporary Ten Pin Alley or kill the lights at crazy late night Conga Bowl.
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PERFECT WEAPON™
"...one of the first *true* 3D fighting games."
Next Generation
"If you're in the mood for a combination of fighting and action , this is for you"
PSX 1996 Holiday Buyer's Guide
"Perfect Weapon may very well end up as one of the most unique and exciting products to hit the PlayStation this year"
Greg Off , Editor in Chief , PS Extreme
"Whoa , a new approach to a fighting game . I found the 3D realism and the moves really appealing"
Electronic Gaming Monthly
"Years from now when action/fighting games advance to a higher level , I feel gamers will look back to find this game at their roots"
Electronic Gaming Monthly
"I have reviewed over 1,000 games and have never seen anything like Perfect Weapon"
Lawrence Neves , Senior Editor , Game Pro
"A nice , long , difficult quest (for a change !) ."
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A new dimension in gaming...
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TOMB RAIDER — SONY PLAYSTATION — ALL WEAPONS!



J. SEAN McKAY
jsmcay@enteract.com

Having trouble with the T-REX? Just input this code and enjoy the lovely carnage! While playing the game, simply press SELECT to bring up the inventory screen. Then enter: L1, TRIANGLE, R2, L2, L2, R2, CIRCLE, L1. If you do the code correctly, you will hear Lara make a lovely sound. Then just select the weapon of choice and blast away! (Input again to refill ammo.)





WIPEOUT XL — SONY PLAYSTATION — CRAZY CODES!





Those people at PSYGNOSIS have too much time on their hands! Check out these wacky and cool codes for WIPEOUT XL! Enjoy!

ANIMAL TEAMS: HOLD L1+R2+START+SELECT while the game is loading up. Voila!
CHALLENGE MODE: Enter the following in the OPTIONS menu.
CHALLENGE 1: Press SQUARE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE.
CHALLENGE 2: Press SQUARE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, X, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, X, CIRCLE, CIRCLE.
PIRANHA TEAM: To access the PIRANHA TEAM, HOLD L1+R1+SELECT at the MAIN MENU. Then, while holding these buttons down, press X, X, X, X, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE.
PHANTOM CLASS: Repeat PIRANHA TEAM code...
ALL EIGHT TRACKS: Repeat PIRANHA TEAM code...

JAMES KING
FALLBROOK, CALIFORNIA

MACHINE GUN: To refit your vehicle with machine guns, PAUSE the game and HOLD L1+R1+SELECT. With these buttons held down, press SQUARE, CIRCLE, X, SQUARE, CIRCLE, X, TRIANGLE.
INFINITE ENERGY: For unlimited energy, PAUSE the game and HOLD L1+R1+SELECT. While holding these buttons, press TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, CIRCLE,TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, CIRCLE.
INFINITE WEAPONS: For unlimited firepower (OH-YEAH!), PAUSE the game and HOLD L1+R1+SELECT. While holding these buttons, press X, SQUARE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE.
INFINITE TIME: Slow down and enjoy the scenery with this code! For unlimited time, PAUSE the game and HOLD L1+R1+SELECT. And again, while holding the buttons, press TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, X, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, X.

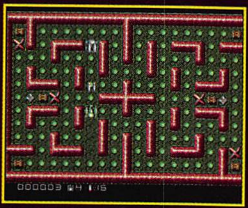
CONTRA: LEGACY OF WAR — SONY PLAYSTATION — MORE CODES!



What CONTRA game would be complete without codes? Enter all of these codes at the TITLE SCREEN, and enjoy!

BAMBOO ARCADE: R2, R1, RIGHT, LEFT, L1 AND L2.
BAMBOO GYRUS: L2, L1, LEFT, RIGHT, R1 AND R2.
UNLIMITED CONTINUES: L2, R2, L1, R1, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT.
WEAPON SELECT: L2, R2, L1, L2, UP, DOWN, DOWN, UP.
SFX BROWSER: R2, R1, L1, L2, UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT.
MOVIE PLAYER: L2, L1, R1, R2, UP, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT.

DCCooper7@aol.com




SEGA SATURN
PlayStation
MEGA MAN
MEGA MYTH
MEGA LEGEND
THE BLUE BOMBER'S BACK.
MEGA MAN 8
ANNIVERSARY COLLECTOR'S EDITION
brings you brand new Mega features and classic Mega moves. The whole cast has returned with devious **new enemies, smooth animation,** and endless **customizing upgrades.** Plus, the **best Japanese anime battle intros available on any platform today!** In honor of the Legend's 10th anniversary, we've also included a gift with every package. It's a **full color collector's anthology booklet** of Mega Man artwork previously unreleased in the U.S.
Welcome back, Mega Man!
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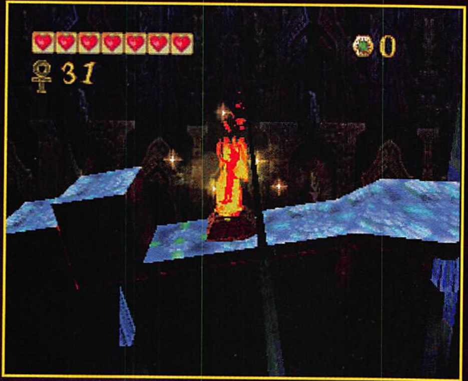



This code hails to us from Jonathan D. Rachels. Good Job! We're pretty sure everyone out there will have fun playing with these hilarious codes! The Sega Nomad is on its way!

Input these codes in the **PASSWORD SCREEN:**

TWISTEYE: - Hold L1 and L2 and move the D-pad left or right to rotate the screen. Press DOWN to center it again.
THETHING: - Hold L2 and press the CIRCLE button to change shapes. X swaps back to normal shape.
HARDBODY: - 'Invincibility'
BODYSWAP: - Press TRIANGLE to change players during mid-game.
OTTOFIRE: - Permanent Weapon
VITAMINS: - 31 Lives!
CORONARY: - Loads of extra hearts.
BORNFREE: - Go to any level.
TOMMYBOY: - The pinball game. Finish a level and go to the OPTION to play this.
CADASH: - Bonus level after every level of the game is finished.

JONATHAN D. RACHELS
beckrach@juno.com

THE REUBUS REPORT PRESENTS Jet Moto

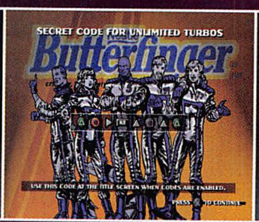








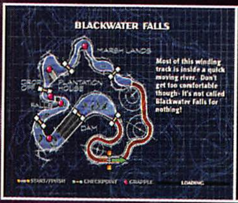






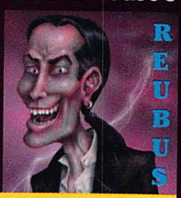
So who's up to the challenge of this incredibly tough racer? Reubus, that's who! Beat the game on Professional level and you're a true gamer (like me)! After that, you will be presented with a shot of your character, and then one of your whole team, along with one of nine codes. Also, a new difficulty level appears ("Master," which I've also beaten numerous times), and a small "Codes Enabled" balloon appears at the title screen (see first shot, first row). Yup, that's right: You can only use these codes *after* you've beaten the game *without* them. There are two codes per team, and when these have been obtained, you'll get the ninth, accompanied by a nifty shot of the Singletrac team (see last shot, second row). Can't manage it? (sigh...) Well, we can't *all* be me...

TEAM	CODE TO ENABLE:	ENTER AT "CODES ENABLED" SCREEN:
AXIOM	AGILITY	Down, Circle, Left, L1, Left, Right, Left, Right
	ROCKET RACER	Triangle, Up, Up, L2, L2, Up, Up, Up
K2	DOUBLE STUNT POINTS	Right, Up, Circle, L2, Triangle, Circle, R1, R2
	ZERO RESISTANCE	Square, L1, Triangle, Right, L1, Down, R2, Triangle
MOUNTAIN DEW	SHOW-OFF CAMERAS	Triangle, Down, Square, Triangle, L1, L1, R1, R1
	AIR BRAKES	R1, R2, Right, L2, Up, Circle, Up, Circle
BUTTERFINGER	UNLIMITED TURBOS	Triangle, Circle, Right, R2, Up, Square, Up, Triangle
	ICE RACING MODE	Up, R2, R1, Right, L1, Square, Right, Right
SINGLETRAC	2-PLAYER AI	Circle, Square, R2, Circle, Triangle, L2, Right, Up

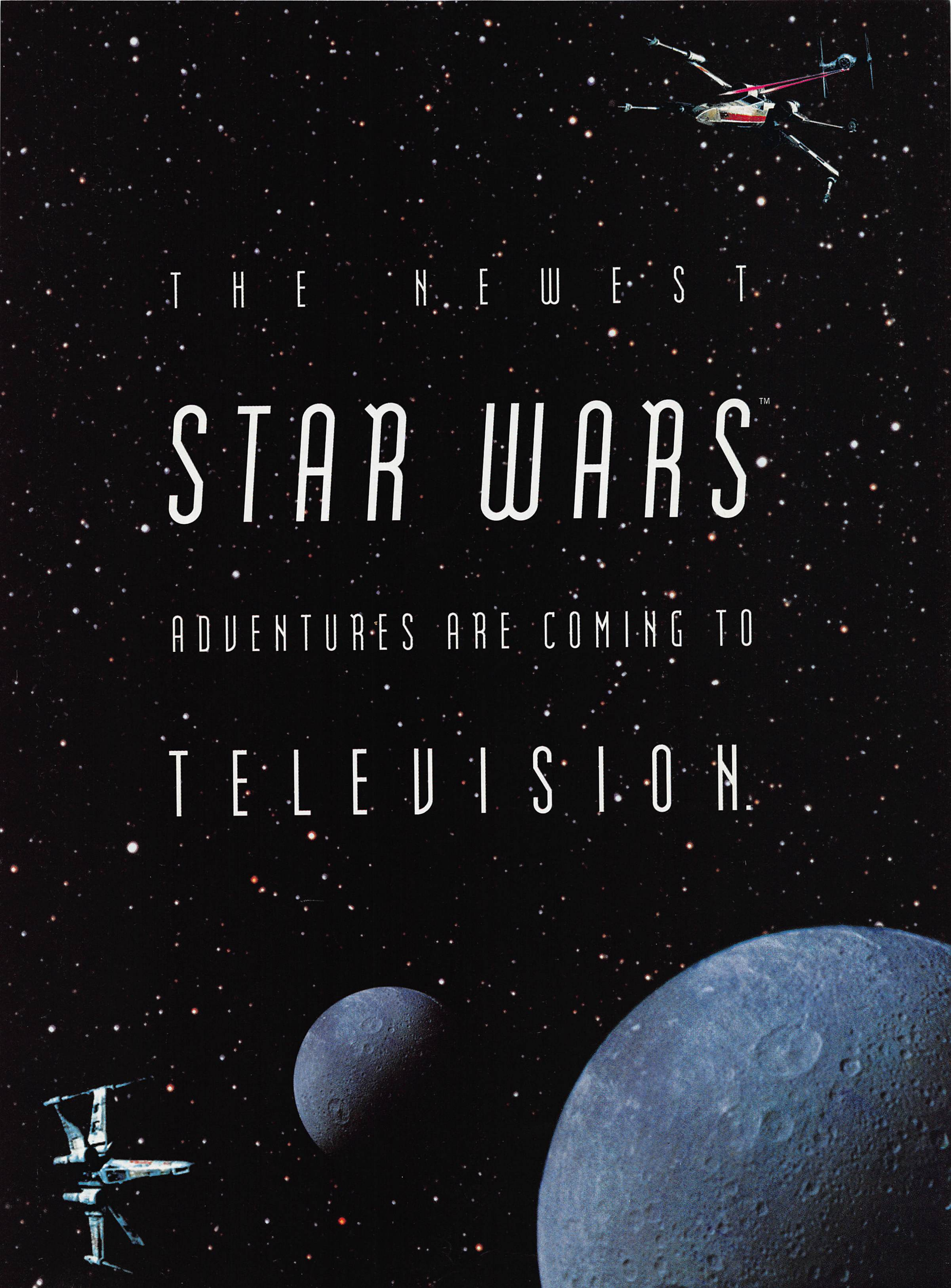


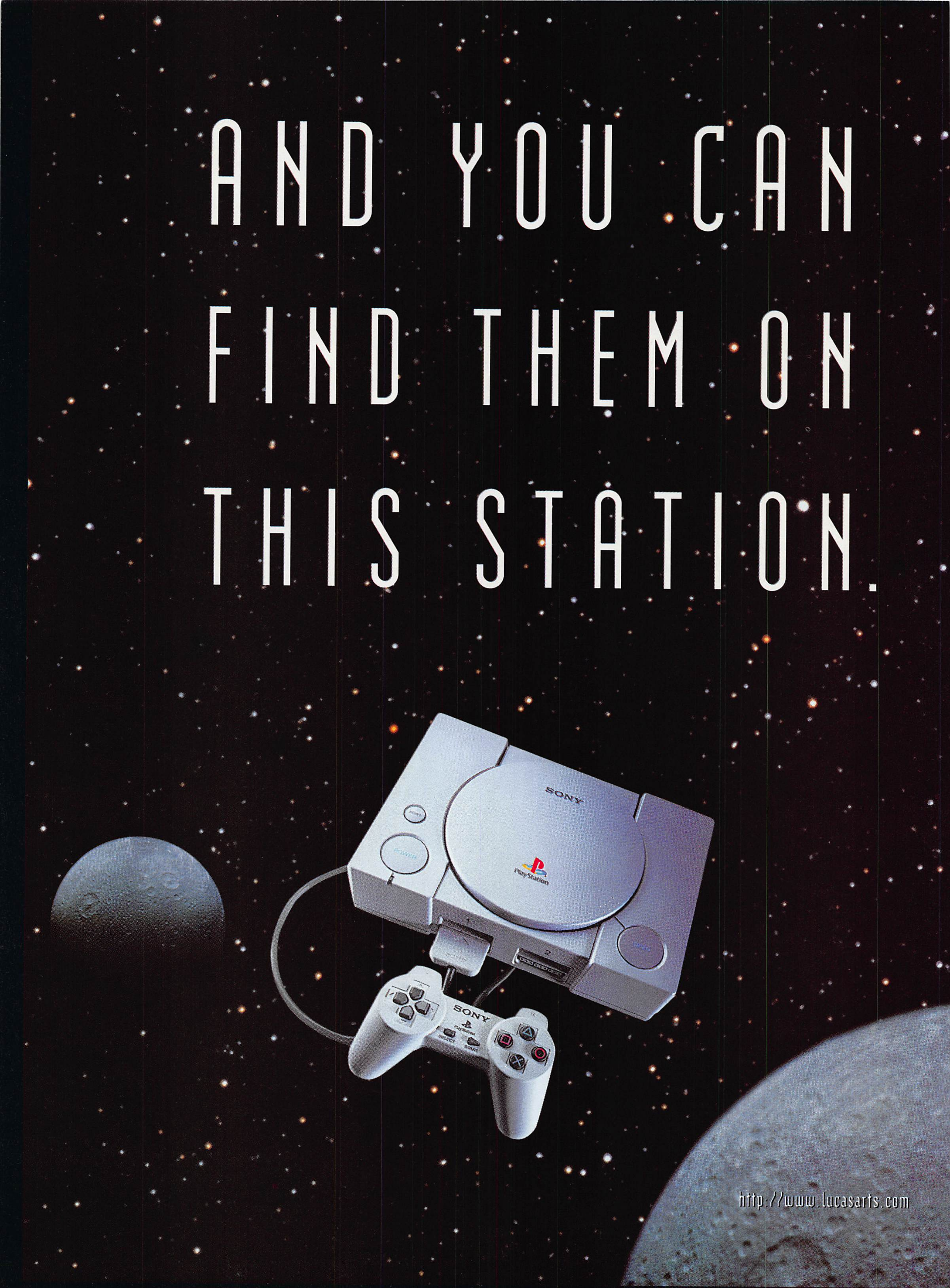



Here's a couple o' tips that will help to defeat Jet Moto on Professional the first time around. While Blackwater Falls presents little trouble at the easier settings, I found myself having great difficulty with it at the Pro level. That is, until I found this sweet little shortcut through the plantation house's main hallway. The actual distance saved ain't much, but the time saved is just enough to completely out-distance the competition. Also, the skilled among you can turbo across the last two switchbacks on the Cliffdiver course, a definite time-saver in another of the tougher tracks, but not easy to pull off...



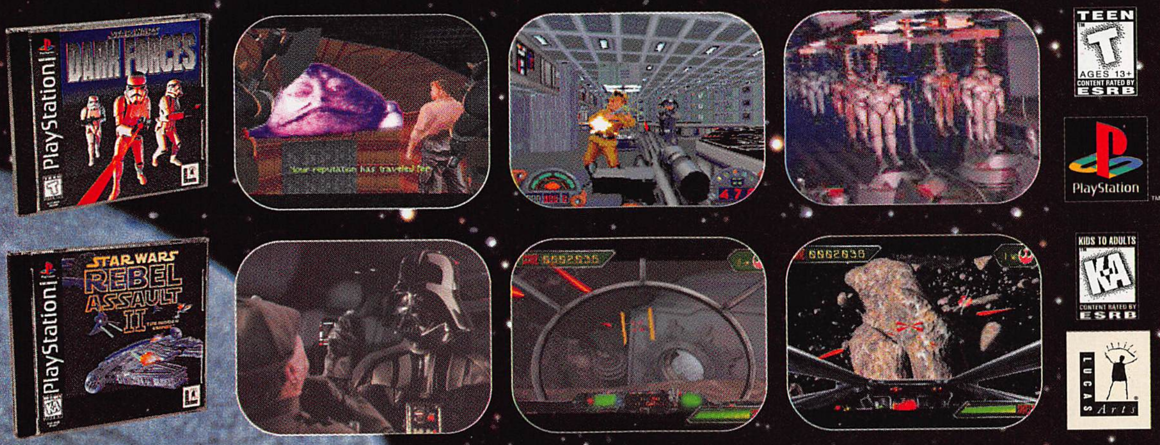
THIS HAS BEEN THE REUBUS REPORT. WE NOW RETURN YOU TO OUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED PROGRAM...


THE NEWEST
STAR WARS™
ADVENTURES ARE COMING TO
TELEVISION.


AND YOU CAN
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Drop that remote. Two action-packed *Star Wars* games have arrived - specially enhanced for the PlayStation™ game console. Dark Forces™ surrounds you with its visceral brand of first-person fire-power, while Rebel Assault II: The Hidden Empire™ launches its perfect combination of live-action video and intense space combat. Two thrilling *Star Wars* experiences - both designed to take maximum advantage of the power found in Sony's stellar game system. Who said there's nothing good on TV?

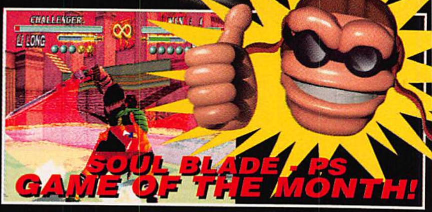


VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality



E. STORM NICK ROX KNIGHTMARE SHIDOSHI ORION GLITCH TAKUHI CHIEF HAMBLETON





SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE
NINTENDO 64
NINTENDO
ACTION/ADVENTURE



The Nintendo 64 never ceases to amaze me. While *Shadows* is not my idea of the perfect game there are those moments when it just just amazes me. In 3rd-person (my perspective of choice) the controls are a little messy but that aside I find *Shadows* a vast and highly enjoyable game. Truth is, I'd be beside myself wailing praises like a mad man if I didn't know what's coming soon. It's hard to believe you're playing a 1st generation game while you're riding on top of a train through a huge canyon, enjoying cavernous adventures and flying perfection. All of the engines are good, some are great, the music's ace, (but repetitive) and the game's long, with big pay-off for the manly gamer that truly destroys it. There you have it.

G 8 C 7 P 9 M 7 O 9 **89**



Star Wars meets N64? It sounds like a match made in heaven! And to some extent, it is. *SOTE* looks, sounds and plays great. The different game styles go well together, and there's a lot of great set pieces that really immerse you in the *Star Wars* universe. Unfortunately, the swoop bike stage is weak, and there are some really irritating control problems on the corridor sections. Despite this, I really got into *SOTE*, and there's nothing else like it on the N64. A must-buy for *Star Wars* fans, and highly recommended to everyone else.

G 9 C 7 P 9 M 9 O 8 **91**



LucasArts has done a fine job translating the *Star Wars* universe onto the 64-bit screen, and the result is a vast game with various gameplay elements and some spectacular graphical effects. However, there are some problems (such as moon-walking AT-ATs, a rather uneventful swoop bike stage, problems with control on the *Doom*-type levels and music which loops to the point of insanity), but these can be forgiven as LucasArts has striven to provide you with an in-depth excursion into the realm of the Jedi. Not perfect by any means (expert gamers should have this licked in a week), but still darn fine fun! Maybe the force will be with Nintendo next time...

G 9 C 7 P 8 M 7 O 9 **90**



CRUIS'N USA
NINTENDO 64
NINTENDO
RACING



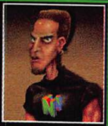
After never having played the coin-op I entered this review with no preconceived notions. What I found was *Outrun* gameplay made more annoying than a bug in your nose by the analog wand, clean graphics with heavy pop-goes-the-buildings, supermarket melodies and basically little else. As for the 2 player mode, well, let's not even go there. Games like this better come out while things are dry because a year from now such spittle will be unacceptable.

G 7 C 5 P 3 M 1 O 4 **50**



An amazing conversion, but then I never liked the coin-op in the first place. The graphics are jerky, the control is simple, the stages are repetitive and the two player mode looks awful. I'd love to know what the Super Mario Club make of this!? If you dug *Cruis'n* in the arcades (as I know a lot of people did) then this is for you. Otherwise I'd advise you to steer clear. The worst N64 title yet.

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 3 O 6 **65**



I think *Cruis'n USA* is very impressive, simply because, in most areas, it's even better than the arcade. I know the music hurts, but where *Cruis'n USA* really shines is the gameplay. I just wish the pop-up wasn't so bad. The control is precise, and the 2 player mode is great fun, but when compared to other N64 games (i.e. *WaveRace*, *Mario Kart*, and *PilotWings*), the graphics are inexcusably poor. It's just not what I was expecting from a home translation. Good, but not N64 good.

G 7 C 9 P 9 M 4 O 6 **75**



KI GOLD
NINTENDO 64
NINTENDO
FIGHTING



Now here's man-style gaming! Everything an arcade port should be can be found right here in *KI Gold*. This monstrous fighter screams with intensity. Sure some frames are gone but it still looks hot, especially with the new real time backgrounds. I've been playing non-stop since *KI* came out and I'm still miles away from truly learning all there is to know. *Killer's* got the depth, the tunes, and the graphic force to keep me going until I've mastered it. Excellent!

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 8 **90**



You know what I said for *Cruis'n USA*? Well, disco. Same thing here. If you like *KI*, you're going to love this. If you've never played *KI*, then you may not. Still, it's a remarkable conversion, and while I don't think it's better than *SFA2*, I do think it's a good game. The huge combos aren't for everyone, but there's a lot of technique to master, and it's definitely a step up from *MK Trilogy*. The curse of the N64 pads strikes again.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 9 O 7 **86**



EndooooKuuuuuuken! Fans of *KI* rejoice – *KI Gold* for N64 is here! I've spent years searching for a fighting game where the aggressor is justly rewarded; rather than *SFA2*'s "I can win by slapping three buttons for instant combo mode!" With hours of butt-stompin' gameplay, tons o' secrets, pumpin' music and NO LOADING, what more could you ask for? Well, maybe a better controller. I love the N64 pads, but for *KI* it's like trying to play *Tetris* on turbo speed with your toes.

G 9 C 8 P 10 M 10 O 7 **98**



MARIO KART 64
NINTENDO 64
NINTENDO
RACING



How I love my Nintendo 64. The second you turn on the power and hear the game begin you know you're entering the Miyamoto Zone. This is a place where happiness prevails, and you think of little else but the display before you. Skill is a must in *M-Kart 64* but much is left to chance. Picking up and using items correctly is essential (along with a little luck) and some drivers seem luckier than others (Wario's the man!). Overall, the balance is questionable but I kind of like it. Graphically, I'm having a hard time realizing I'm playing a game that looks this good; I mean, *M-Kart 64* is just beautiful. The music's trademark Miya-joy as well. Win it all, race backwards and then go back for more! That's what I say.

G 10 C 10 P 9 M 8 O 8 **95**



If I were to score *Super Mario Kart* today, I'd give it a 100. So why am I giving the sequel less? Because even though it adds a lot of cool ideas, I feel it's lost the perfect balance that made SMK so great. The tracks are too easy, the CPU AI is cheap, the frame rate is poor for multi-player games, and worst of all, the weapon system is completely broken. Being second is actually an advantage! The new power-sliding system is cool, and the game looks amazing, but it's just not as good as it could have been.

G 9 C 10 P 8 M 9 O 8 **93**



A very disappointing release and the first shock for me; is Miyamoto losing his magical touch? There's slowdown and a disturbing lack of textures in multi-player mode, only 16 tracks and... (horror of horrors) pop-up!! Sure this plays a hugely addictive two (or more) player game, but in one player? No coins and over-speedy players; turning the game into a slinging match of who has the best weapons at first... until you discover the skid speed-up (which makes the game even easier!). There's no real evidence of 64-bit power here; this is essentially a souped-up version of *Motor Toon GP 2*, but with less secrets. Marvelous in multi-player (if you can see what's going on), but a shockingly short battle of items in one player. I'm starting to see 64-bit limitations here...

G 8 C 9 P 8 M 7 O 9 **89**



MEGAMAN 8
PLAYSTATION
CAPCOM
ACTION/PLATFORM



Hey, it's *MegaMan*, I'll take it anyway I can get it. With this version however I'm just a little disappointed (really, just a little). I'm happy it's hand-drawn 2D, but I was hoping for more effects and a lot more parallax. *Hermie Hopperhead* had six layers where *MM8* has 2 in most places. The animation, music, gameplay and difficulty however, are all Capcom quality and anyone who loves *MegaMan* will surely enjoy this game to no end. The animation sequences are amazingly done, by the way. The PS needed this game badly. It fills a void that needs filling. 2D must never die.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 7 **85**



I'll tell you what annoys me... people who say "Wow, this game sucks... it's so 16-bit!" whenever a 2-D, hand-drawn game comes in. First of all, careful examination will reveal that no 16-bit system ever had the storage power for this kind of animation, not to mention the half-hour of FMV. But all that's irrelevant; you play *MM8* for the rock-solid, innovative gameplay. If you can hang with graphics that aren't polygonal, please give *MM8* a try. You'll find an excellent game behind the hand-drawn veneer.

G 8 C 9 P 10 M 7 O 8 **87**



Can you believe we're up to *8*? This series will never die! Everything I love about *MegaMan*, new and old, is back in this hot 32-bit sequel. Tough levels? Check. Cool powers? Check. And Rush, still the best sidekick ever. There's shooter sequences, man-style platforming, and powerful boss scenarios. Yeah, it needs more parallax and special effects, but brilliant animation and hot colors compensate a thousandfold. Most importantly, Capcom once again confirms the viability of 2D.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 9 **86**



Nothing, absolutely nothing, can match the thrill and adrenaline rush of an "R-Racer" series game. Couple the trade-mark *Ridge Racer* feeling with the most finely-tuned PlayStation 3-D engine yet seen and you get the best home racing game ever. Namco has gone so far above and beyond the call of duty with the options – tons of fully upgradeable and customizable cars, the ability to draw your own logo, etc. – that *Rage* nearly defies belief! If you like racing games at all, please don't miss this near-perfect example of the genre. If not for the guitarified tunes which can't hope to match Shinji Hosoe and Ayako Saso's *Ridge Racer* efforts, I might give this one a perfect 100...

G 10 C 10 P 10 M 8 O 7 **98**



Gentlemen... forget your pop-up and start your playing! You are about to experience the fastest racing game ever seen. When you sit in a car that can travel at speeds of 374 kph (*Wipeout XL*'s Chinese prototype craft only managed 340 kph) and the track textures move so fast under you they appear to go backwards, you know you're at racing perfection. I simply haven't had this much fun with a racing title ever, and with good reason; the track has almost no pop-up, there's a load more features, the control is absolute perfection, the game is more difficult and you can buy and then upgrade your own car, changing everything you want in the process. Stop any thoughts about moaning about the lack of courses (that isn't the point); becoming a master of the four course variants is. The most fun-filled racer you're ever likely to play.

G 10 C 10 P 10 M 9 O 9 **98**



Yes, it's true. Namco's made a racer good enough for me to embrace their patented hood cam. *Rage Racer* is simply the king of the current driving crop with visuals you simply won't believe (that waterfall!), the best control in the series yet, and as usual, a soundtrack you'll never tire of. I think George Michael even chimes in on one track. Like you care. The new cars by the way, midget-sized Mimi's and the like, are beyond welcome.

G 9 C 10 P 9 M 9 O 7 **95**



RAGE RACER
PLAYSTATION
NAMCO
RACING



Gremlin has tried something a little different here. Incorporating all the bloody violence, massive explosions and the most hideous collection of freakish weirdos (unless you're counting Shidoshi) ever seen into a top-down carnage platformer is all good and well, but Gremlin has gone one step further; adding the 3D element, even better light-sourcing and more puzzles. This is still a no-brains gore-fest, but for mindless violence, you can't really have more fun than this. One final note to Gremlin; yep, we know who Fisto is; we've seen his paint jobs from Hunter's Bar to Pitsmoor!

G 8 C 9 P 8 M 9 O 8 **86**



Reloaded is a sequel in the truest sense of the word. A quick play reveals that, yes, you're mindlessly blasting mutant freaks into a bloody submission with big guns (nothin' wrong with that). Play deeper, however, and you'll see what makes this a sequel. Cool puzzles, multi-level stages (which actually require thought), and many environmentally specific hazards are are now a factor. Combined with boss encounters, wild level design, and much, much improved graphics and sound, *Reloaded* is a very worthy purchase.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 8 **84**



One of the few editors at GF who embraced the original for its sheer amount of carnage-filled shooting, I feel somewhat vindicated by this more than worthy sequel. Interplay has left the shooting elements fully intact while adding diverse missions, length, and more of gaming's most notorious maniacs. For those who passed on the mindless romp that was *Loaded*, now's the time to seize this awesome sequel and see what all the fuss is about.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 8 **89**



RELOADED
PLAYSTATION
INTERPLAY
ACTION/ADVENTURE



Quirky. I don't know what to think of *Psychic Force*. Sure, it looks real good, and has the best animated intro ever (it's to hand-drawn intros what *Soul Edge*'s is to CG ones), but as a fighting game it has very little strategy. Yes!! Throw massive blasts of psychic energy at each other from really, really far away!! Over and over!! If you aren't looking for a perfectly balanced fighting game to play with friends, it's pretty fun, and the ultra-anime atmosphere is very cool. The bottom line: An excellent and pretty 1-player game.

G 8 C 7 P 5 M 7 O 9 **80**



Tired of those other 3D fighters? *Psychic Force* is an awesome alternative. The concept of flying around an aerial arena, madly firing psychic energy into each other, is hot. Every time I play, I'm actually developing new strategies, now that I've got this big playfield. Throw in various attack styles and strengths, the unique powers of each fighter, and the use of combos and defensive moves, and *PF* scores high marks for its revolutionary play mechanics. Course, the pretty polygonal graphics don't hurt, and a superlative Zuntata soundtrack seals it. Yep, this one's a winner.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 9 **84**



I'm a sucker for Taito games... Two reasons: 1. Zuntata, they make music that I simply can't get enough of, and 2. History. Taito has brought us countless classics like the *Darius*, and the *Ninja Warriors* series. This, their 1st 3D fighter is surprisingly good. The perspective is highly unique in a field filled with "me too's," the graphics are above average and the soundtrack is pure Zuntata. The intro is nothing short of brilliant to boot.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 8 **80**



PSYCHIC FORCE
PLAYSTATION
ACCLAIM
FIGHTING



Ah... another title that's destined to be underrated by all. And why? I'm thinkin' it's the frame rate, which ain't too smooth. Or the play mechanics, which are a little unconventional. The graphics I can handle, 'cause these are big 3D environments that gobble up lots of frames. And surprisingly, the unconventional play mechanics are what kept me involved. There's so much exploration, blasting, and platforming, that I became hopelessly immersed in my mission. I urge you to give *Divide* a chance, if only to see that obscure titles can supply quality gameplay, just like the big shots.

G 7 C 7 P 9 M 6 O 10 **82**



After trying *The Divide* for the first time, I just wasn't too impressed. Low frame rate, confusing play-mechanics – nothing seemed right. After extensive playing, however, I came to appreciate the massive 3D environments, the action/adventure/platforming mix, and the excellent level design. Additionally, the control is solid, and the rotating gun concept is cool. Better graphics would've been nice, there's no doubt, but I'm enjoying *The Divide* nonetheless.

G 6 C 7 P 8 M 6 O 9 **78**



The Divide is an interesting game. What it lacks in graphics, it makes up for in gameplay. Those familiar with the *Metroid* style of search-and-destroy-then-search-again gameplay will be right at home with this complex adventure. The controls do take some time to adapt to and the music's nothing to write home about, but overall this is definitely a worthwhile adventure game. *The Divide*'s biggest problem is the competition which is oh-so-strong on the strong. Sleeper hit? I hope so.

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 7 O 9 **78**



THE DIVIDE
PLAYSTATION
VIACOM
ACTION



Bad news! Such hot game design, to say nothing of the theme, and all wasted in this shoddy conversion. No, it goes beyond shoddy; *Dark Forces* is deep into the *Wolfenstein 3D* realm. Actually, I take that back. *Wolfenstein* had a MUCH better frame rate. Er... uh... must think of something good to say... hot tunes! Yeah. Let's hope LucasArts decides to port *Dark Forces II* over and spends more than a week on it.

G 4 C 8 P 7 M 9 O 5 **66**



When I heard *Dark Forces* was coming to the PlayStation, I was ecstatic. I've been an avid fan of the whole *Star Wars* franchise since seeing the first one 18 times in the theaters in '77, and I couldn't wait to play this. The three SNES games were great, good and not-so-good, in that order, and this appears to continue the trend, with very choppy graphics and a pixel-fest throughout. The music is great, the levels awesome, and the gameplay is decent (the frame rate picks up indoors), but if *Star Wars* ain't your thing, neither is this.

G 6 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 7 **82**



I don't care how good the game design is (and it's darn good here) there's no excuse for these graphics on the PlayStation. We're talkin tragic here folks. The backdrops are 8-bit, the game is a sea of pixels and the frame rate is downright scary. The force definitely stayed home this time, I'm sorry to say. In the game's defense, it is one of the finest corridor designs around and the music is straight out of the flicks but c'mon, this game needs the PS's arsenal of goodies and they didn't use 'em. A shame really.

G 4 C 8 P 6 M 8 O 7 **68**



DARK FORCES
PLAYSTATION
LUCASARTS
ACTION/ADVENTURE



While I tend to keep my distance from these "cyber" sports titles, I actually enjoyed *LOP*. The play-mechanics, i.e., the strategy involved in charging the ball, is a unique and refreshing concept. Ultimately, though, despite a fantastic 30fps 3D engine, *LOP* is not too exciting. Other games in this genre have brutal, satisfying combat, and dramatic supermoves. *LOP* is fun, but after some time you might tire of the repeated patterns and un-inspired gameplay and presentation. The mega-replayable four player mode, however, saves the day.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 6 **76**



A number of futuristic sports titles have come out lately, but *League of Pain* was one of the few to actually hold my interest. The game controls well (once you get the hang of it), the graphics are dark, but nice, and the gameplay was challenging but not overly frustrating. On the downside, I didn't find myself enjoying the game unless I was playing against other living beings. While I don't usually go for this type of game, it's a quality product, so if this is your cup of tea then give it a go.

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 6 O 7 **75**



First there was *Pitball*. I loved it. Now comes *League of Pain*, the next battle-sport title for the PS. *LOP* has a kick-ass 3D engine, pushin' eight polygonal players and a deep, hyper-textured stadium at 30fps. The play mechanics don't quite pack the thrill-kill of *Pitball*, but they're more strategy-intensive and therefore more cerebral, which is always good. While it might require the multi-player mode to keep this title alive in your library, *LOP* is solid enough, overall, to warrant your interest.

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 8 O 7 **81**



LEAGUE OF PAIN
PLAYSTATION
PSYGNOSIS
SPORTS



COMMAND & CONQUER
PLAYSTATION
VIRGIN
STRATEGY

My favorite action/strategy title of all time finally makes it to the PS, and its a superb conversion! The real-time resource management and panic-inducing battles are as enjoyable as ever, only this time I'm using a pad instead of a mouse. The PS version has extra missions and cleaner FMV than the Saturn version, but no extra speed settings. *C&C* is a strategy game for people who don't normally like strategy games. One question though: where's the link-up mode?!

G 8 C 9 P 10 M 9 O 8 — **93**

Who'd've thought that strategy could be such a blast? Detailed graphics, groovin' tunes and intense gameplay make *C&C* a thinking man's shoot-'em-up. It doesn't matter what version you choose, get ready for hours of tactical genocide and wanton destruction. Humor, violence, deep, deep gameplay and some of the most impressive FMV this side of Namco – *C&C* kicks ass and takes names!

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 9 O 9 — **91**

What a month for games! Now strategy fans have another reason to rejoice; a perfect conversion of a horribly addictive PC classic; with stomping tunes, loads of tiny and really cool animated army chaps destroying loads of other tiny and really cool animated chaps. The result? A fiendishly addictive strategy game with humor and the building of huge sprawling bases deep into enemy territory in order to launch a last desperate attack. Excellent control of your troops coupled with a vast array of military hardware to play with makes this a sure-fire winner. Whole-heartedly recommended!

G 8 C 9 P 10 M 10 O 10 — **96**



SOUL BLADE
PLAYSTATION
NAMCO
FIGHTING

After *Star Gladiator* and *Tekken 2* I thought I'd seen it all. Could graphics get any better? Can CG be any grander? The minute I laid eyes on Soul Edge both questions were answered. Yes & yes. Now add to that splendor deep gameplay, lighting effects from the gods, over 80 weapons, hidden characters and awesome music, and what do you have?... Yet another legendary PS fighter. Is there no end to this machine's capabilities? Namco should be proud. *Soul Blade* is a winner. A big winner!

G 10 C 9 P 10 M 9 O 9 — **98**

After what must rank as the most spectacular CG intro of all time, Namco treats us to yet another jaw-dropping arcade conversion that doesn't just go one further than the coin-op, it blows it out of the water! Instinctive, gratifying gameplay; awesome period music; stunning backgrounds; new weapons; new characters; the incredible Edge Master Mode and some of the most spectacular graphics yet seen on any home system (and that includes 64-bit)! If you like 3D fighters, you're going to be in heaven with this! Namco rules!

G 10 C 9 P 9 M 10 O 9 — **96**

Namco has really outdone themselves this time; not only do you get a better version of the arcade monster (more detail in the levels, more modes and options aplenty), but there's the infamous Edge Master Mode which takes you to the very limits, allowing you to become an expert of every character, thus granting you a choice of over 80(!) weapons in two-player mode! Add to this a great and well-rounded game of sword-swiping, gob-smacking 3D backdrops and an intro which is worth buying the game for alone, and you're not even approaching the excitement and joy of this fine Namco classic. The time spent by the best developers in the world has clearly paid off; no gamer should be without this; the most spectacular fighting game ever to grace a console.

G 10 C 10 P 10 M 9 O 9 — **98**



DIE HARD TRILOGY
SATURN
FOX
MULTI-GENRE

Next to *Shadows* for N64, this is the only game that succeeds in putting three different game engines together, and making them all fun to play. The graphics are not quite as sharp as the PS version, but the gameplay and music are close enough. The only real criticism I have (and this goes for both versions) is that when you beat any of the *DH* games, you have to go back to the title screen and start a new game again – it doesn't just start you off on the next game (movie) automatically.

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 8 — **75**

This makes me very sad. The Saturn CAN handle a game like this. Unfortunately, the programmers couldn't handle the Saturn. The game itself is still really cool, content-wise, but a poor frame rate transforms some levels into a hellish experience (especially in *Die Harder*). You know, the music's great, so too are the sound effects, and this version loads quickly, but the game just moans along at truly pitiful speeds sometimes. Personally, I'll stick with the PS version.

G 5 C 7 P 9 M 9 O 9 — **68**

Die Hard Trilogy is exactly how you'd expect a Saturn conversion of a PS game to be... less. It still plays the same (pretty cool) but the textures are messier, the transparencies are ugly meshes, there's no lens flares and the frame rate is appallingly low in places (especially on *Die Hard 2*). If you really want a *Die Hard* game, my advice to you is get a PS or wait for *Die Hard Arcade*.

G 6 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 8 — **70**



HARDCORE 4 X 4
SATURN
ASC
RACING

Hardcore's just not the same on the Saturn. If I've said it once I've said it a million times: 3D polygon based games that come from the PlayStation to the Saturn will always spell disappointment. The lack of transparencies in this version cause blinding conditions at times and the absence of lighting FX take much from the PS game's graphic appeal. *Hardcore*'s still a good racer, but once again it belongs on the PlayStation.

G 6 C 7 P 7 M 5 O 7 — **65**

Another tragic PS to Saturn conversion. Why?! Simply stated, a good team of Saturn coders could have developed this game two years ago. There's a ton of trucks and tracks, extremely realistic play mechanics, and the computer AI is pretty good, but do you really *need* to play this version? The frame rate is appalling, the clipping makes you feel like you're driving blind, and the voice-over sounds muffled. If the Saturn's having trouble, it's because of games like this.

G 3 C 7 P 7 M 5 O 6 — **52**

Hardcore 4X4 is exactly how you'd expect a Saturn conversion of a PS game to be... less. Whoa! Deja Vu! That's right, Saturn fans, once again a perfectly good PS game has become a perfectly crud Saturn door stop. The controls are broken, the visuals are jerky, and the whole thing smells like Jacques' strap. I know it's tough to convert a PS game to Saturn, but if the results are this bad, why bother?

G 6 C 5 P 7 M 6 O 7 — **60**



CHRISTMAS NIGHTS
SATURN
SEGA
ALTERNATIVE

I'm scoring *CN* so high for three reasons. First, because I feel it's an excellent product. The new look is magical, the gameplay is as fluid and intuitive as ever, and even after you're bored with the game, the extra features act as an indispensable companion to regular *NiGHTS*. Secondly, because of what it represents: an unprecedented display of generosity from Sega to all Saturn owners. Talk about value for money – it's free! And thirdly, because *CN* makes me smile more than any game I've ever played. I love this game and you must get it – it's that simple.

G 9 C 10 P 10 M 10 O 10 — **96**

Isn't this game amazing? Knightmare and I are like two little kids on Christmas morning. Look, this game costs you little or nothing, it includes three levels, enhanced graphics, and countless hidden treasures. You can even arrange your own *NiGHTS* tunes! Throw in Sonic, Reala, a ton of top-notch high-res artwork, incredible playability, and you have yourself a very merry Christmas. Thanks Yuji, and thank you Sega, it's good to see that you're on our side.

G 9 C 10 P 10 M 10 O 10 — **97**

You're sitting there, playing *X-Mas NiGHTS*, and you have to keep reminding yourself that you're playing a FREE demo, because there is just so much included in this disc. Beyond the seasonally-changing and gameplay tweaked trial level, you get things like the ability to play Sonic, a time and link attack, music creation system, and so much more. Strangely enough, I actually liked the Christmas theme better than standard *NiGHTS*. Be it a marketing ploy, or a genuine gift from Sega, this is one of the coolest things to come along, both in the game itself and symbolically.

G 9 C 9 P 8 M 9 O 8 — **91**



DARK SAVIOR
SATURN
CLIMAX
ACTION/RPG

Though I find some of the collision questionable, *Dark Savior* is without a doubt a must-have game for every Saturn user. Climax's 3D engine is phenomenal and with 5 parallels the game lasts forever. The CG that awaits should you complete all five is splendid. *DS* isn't the game *Landstalker* was, but it comes close enough for me to love it.

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 8 — **88**

Saturn action/RPGs (make that RPGs period) are a bit thin on the ground right now, so it's nice to see Sega giving *Dark Savior* an official release. The isometric graphics system (mixing polygons and sprites) works well, particularly with the analog pad, and I like the way Climax has structured the game to include equal parts action and adventure. Even though the combat system is kind of lame, having parallel story lines is an ingenious idea, and adds a lot of replay value to an already impressive game. A worthy successor to *Landstalker*.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 9 — **92**

Such a cool game. The 3D engine is hot. The play-mechanics are great. Completing all five parallels is no small task, but getting there – seeing all the wonderfully texture-mapped polygonal sights, exploring the land – is a bliss-laden trip indeed. I'll acknowledge that the fighting system is kinda low budget, but when coupled with the wealth of gameplay at your disposal, you'll forgive, forget, and quest onward with a smile. Climax rewards the faithful with yet another example of awesome action-role playing.

G 9 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 10 — **92**



KONAMI
PROJECT
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PlayStation
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M
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www.konami.com
"Overkill is not only finely tuned and balanced, but a godsend for those fond of 40+ levels of blasting carnage."
GameFan
"A must for lovers of challenging, violent games."
EGM
"Hot rendered graphics, crazy transparencies, burnin' music. Another fine Konami effort."
GameFan
"Overkill offers hours of blood-drenched fun, and there's plenty of replayability...hundreds of hidden areas."
PS Extreme

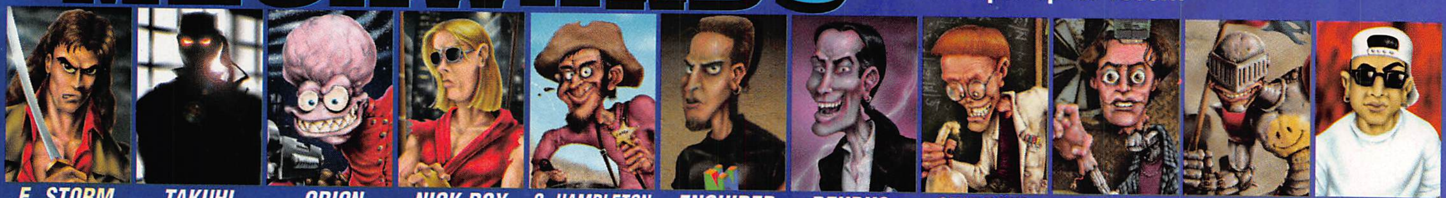

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THE 5TH ANNUAL GAMEFAN MEGAWARDS

We play games everyday, all year, and then, finally, it comes down to this. Eleven video game addicts petitioning for their top games like a pack of crazed lobbyists. Here's how it all shaped up for 1996...



E. STORM · TAKUHI · ORION · NICK ROX · C. HAMBLETON · ENQUIRER · REUBUS · SHIDOSHI · GLITCH · KNIGHTMARE · WAKA

ACTION/PLATFORM

E. Storm 1st: *Crash Bandicoot*
Runner Up: *Pandemonium*
Takuhi 1st: *Crash Bandicoot*
Runner Up: *The Adv. of Lomax*
Orion 1st: *Crash Bandicoot*
Runner Up: *The Adv. of Lomax*
Nick Rox 1st: *The Adv. of Lomax*
Runner Up: *Crash Bandicoot*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Jumping Flash! 2*
Runner Up: *Crash Bandicoot*
Enquirer 1st: *Crash Bandicoot*
Runner Up: *Jumping Flash! 2*
Reubus 1st: *Crash Bandicoot*
Runner Up: *Jumping Flash! 2*
Shidoshi 1st: *Pandemonium*
Runner Up: *Crash Bandicoot*
Glitch 1st: *Crash Bandicoot*
Runner Up: *The Adv. of Lomax*
Knightmare 1st: *Crash Bandicoot*
Runner Up: *Pandemonium*
Waka 1st: *Pandemonium*
Runner Up: *Crash Bandicoot*

ACTION/PLATFORM GAME OF THE YEAR: CRASH BANDICOOT
Runner Up: PANDEMONIUM

ACTION/ADVENTURE

E. Storm 1st: *Super Mario 64*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
Takuhi 1st: *Resident Evil*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
Orion 1st: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
Runner Up: *Resident Evil*
Nick Rox 1st: *Resident Evil*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Super Mario 64*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
Enquirer 1st: *Super Mario 64*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
Reubus 1st: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
Runner Up: *Super Mario 64*
Shidoshi 1st: *Resident Evil*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
Glitch 1st: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
Runner Up: *Super Mario 64*
Knightmare 1st: *Super Mario 64*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
Waka 1st: *Tomb Raider (PS)*
Runner Up: *Resident Evil*

ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME OF THE YEAR: TOMB RAIDER (PLAYSTATION)
Runner Up: SUPER MARIO 64

ACTION/ROLE PLAYING

E. Storm 1st: *Beyond Oasis*
Runner Up: *Dark Savior*
Takuhi 1st: *Beyond Oasis*
Runner Up: *Legacy of Kain*
Orion 1st: *Legacy of Kain*
Runner Up: *Beyond Oasis*
Nick Rox 1st: *Beyond Oasis*
Chief Hambleton 1st: *Kings Field 2*
Runner Up: *Legacy of Kain*
Enquirer 1st: *Legacy of Kain*
Runner Up: *Beyond Oasis*
Reubus 1st: *Legacy of Kain*
Runner Up: *Dark Savior*
Shidoshi 1st: *Beyond Oasis*
Runner Up: *Dark Savior*
Glitch 1st: *Dark Savior*
Runner Up: *Beyond Oasis*
Knightmare 1st: *Beyond Oasis*
Runner Up: *Dark Savior*
Waka 1st: *Legacy of Kain*
Runner Up: *Beyond Oasis*

ACTION/RPG GAME OF THE YEAR: BEYOND OASIS
Runner Up: LEGACY OF KAIN

CORRIDOR

E.Storm 1st: *PowerSlave*
Runner Up: *Tenka*
Takuhi 1st: *PowerSlave*
Runner Up: *Final Doom*
Orion 1st: *Final Doom*
Runner Up: *PowerSlave*
Nick Rox 1st: *PowerSlave*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Final Doom*
Runner Up: *PowerSlave*
Enquirer 1st: *PowerSlave*
Runner Up: *Final Doom*
Reubus 1st: *Final Doom*
Runner Up: *PowerSlave*
Shidoshi 1st: *Disruptor*
Runner Up: *PowerSlave*
Glitch 1st: *PowerSlave*
Runner Up: *Final Doom*
Knightmare 1st: *PowerSlave*
Runner Up: *Tenka*
Waka 1st: *PowerSlave*
Runner Up: *Final Doom*

CORRIDOR GAME OF THE YEAR: POWERSLAVE (SATURN)
Runner Up: FINAL DOOM

SHOOTING

E.Storm 1st: *Panzer Zwei*
Runner Up: *Darius Gaiden*
Takuhi 1st: *Panzer Zwei*
Runner Up: *Virtua Cop 2*
Orion 1st: *Panzer Zwei*
Runner Up: *Virtua Cop 2*
Nick Rox 1st: *Panzer Zwei*
Runner Up: *Virtua Cop 2*
C.Hambleton 1st: *Virtua Cop 2*
Runner Up: *Panzer Zwei*
Enquirer 1st: *Panzer Zwei*
Runner Up: *Darius Gaiden*
Reubus 1st: *Robotron X*
Runner Up: *Virtua Cop 2*
Shidoshi 1st: *Panzer Zwei*
Runner Up: *Virtua Cop 2*
Glitch 1st: *Darius Gaiden*
Runner Up: *Virtua Cop 2*
Knightmare 1st: *Panzer Zwei*
Runner Up: *Virtua Cop 2*
Waka 1st: *Panzer Zwei*
Runner Up: *Darius Gaiden*

SHOOTING GAME OF THE YEAR: PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI (SATURN)
Runner Up: VIRTUA COP 2

FIGHTING

E. Storm 1st: *Fighting Vipers*
Runner Up: *KI Gold*
Takuhi 1st: *Fighting Vipers*
Runner Up: *KOF '96 (Saturn)*
Orion 1st: *Tobal No.1*
Runner Up: *SF Alpha 2 (Saturn)*
Nick Rox 1st: *SF Alpha 2*
Runner Up: *Tobal No.1*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *SF Alpha 2 (Saturn)*
Enquirer 1st: *SF Alpha 2 (Saturn)*
Runner Up: *KI Gold*
Reubus 1st: *SF Alpha 2 (PS)*
Runner Up: *Tekken 2*
Shidoshi 1st: *Samurai Shodown 4*
Runner Up: *KOF '96*
Glitch 1st: *SF Alpha 2*
Runner Up: *Tekken 2*
Knightmare 1st: *Fighting Vipers*
Runner Up: *Virtual On*
Waka 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Fighting Vipers*

FIGHTING GAME OF THE YEAR: STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2 (SATURN)
Runner Up: FIGHTING VIPERS

RACING/SIMULATION

E. Storm 1st: *WaveRace 64*
Runner Up: *Jet Moto*
Orion 1st: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Nick Rox 1st: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Runner Up: *Formula 1*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Runner Up: *WaveRace 64*
Enquirer 1st: *WaveRace 64*
Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Reubus 1st: *Jet Moto*
Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Shidoshi 1st: *Formula 1*
Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Glitch 1st: *WaveRace 64*
Runner Up: *Daytona CCE*
Knightmare 1st: *Daytona CCE*
Runner Up: *WaveRace 64*
Waka 1st: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Runner Up: *WaveRace 64*

RACING GAME OF THE YEAR: RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION /WAVERACE (TIE) Runner Up: 3 WAY TIE! JET MOTO, DAYTONA CCE & F1

RACING/COMBAT

E. Storm 1st: *Wipeout* (Saturn)
Runner Up: *Motor Toon GP 2*
Takuhi 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Wipeout* (Saturn)
Orion 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Wipeout* (Saturn)
Nick Rox 1st: *Motor Toon GP 2*
Runner Up: *Wipeout XL*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Wipeout* (Saturn)
Enquirer 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Motor Toon GP 2*
Reubus 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Wipeout* (Saturn)
Shidoshi 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Twisted Metal 2*
Glitch 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Destruction Derby 2*
Knightmare 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Twisted Metal 2*
Waka 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Motor Toon GP 2*

RACING/COMBAT GAME OF THE YEAR: WIPEOUT XL (PLAYSTATION)
Runner Up: MOTOR TOON GP/WIPEOUT SATURN (tie)

PUZZLE

E. Storm 1st: *Puzzle Fighter*
Runner Up: *Baku Baku Animal*
Takuhi 1st: *Bust a Move 2*
Runner Up: *Baku Baku Animal*
Nick Rox 1st: *Bust a Move 2*
Runner Up: *Puzzle Fighter*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Tetris Attack*
Runner Up: *Puzzle Fighter*
Enquirer 1st: *Tetris Attack*
Runner Up: *Bust A Move 2*
Reubus 1st: *Bust a Move 2*
Runner Up: *Puzzle Fighter*
Shidoshi 1st: *Puzzle Fighter*
Runner Up: *Bubble Bobble*
Glitch 1st: *Bust a Move 2*
Runner Up: *Baku Baku Animal*
Knightmare 1st: *Bubble Bobble*
Runner Up: *Puzzle Fighter*
Waka 1st: *Tetris Attack*
Runner Up: *Bust A Move 2*

PUZZLE GAME OF THE YEAR: TETRIS ATTACK (SUPER NES)
Runner Up: PUZZLE FIGHTER

ROLE-PLAYING

E. Storm 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Mario RPG*
Takuhi 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Persona*
Nick Rox 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Mario RPG*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Mario RPG*
Enquirer 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Mario RPG*
Reubus 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Mario RPG*
Shidoshi 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Lufia 2*
Glitch 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Beyond the Beyond*
Knightmare 1st: *Suikoden*

Runner Up: *Mario RPG*
Waka 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Mario RPG*

RPG GAME OF THE YEAR:
SUIKODEN (PLAYSTATION)
Runner Up: SUPER MARIO RPG

PORTABLE

E. Storm 1st: *Wario VB*
Runner Up: *Red Alarm VB*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Tetris Attack GB*
Runner Up: *Toshinden GB*
Enquirer 1st: *Wario VB*
Runner Up: *Red Alarm VB*
Reubus 1st: *Donkey Kong Land 2 GB*
Runner Up: *Wario VB*
Shidoshi 1st: *Tetris Attack GB*
Runner Up: *Tails Adventure GG*
Glitch 1st: *Wario VB*
Runner Up: *Red Alarm VB*
Knightmare 1st: *Tetris Attack GB*
Runner Up: *Wario VB*
Waka 1st: *Wario VB*
Runner Up: *Red Alarm VB*

PORTABLE GAME OF THE YEAR: WARIO (VIRTUAL BOY) Runner Up: RED ALARM (VIRTUAL BOY) P.S. WE'LL MISS YOU!

STRATEGY

E. Storm 1st: *Return Fire*
Runner Up: *Space Hulk (Saturn)*
Takuhi 1st: *Blazing Heroes*
Runner Up: *Space Hulk (Saturn)*
Orion 1st: *Dragon Force*
Nick Rox 1st: *Return Fire*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Tecmo's Deception*
Runner Up: *Return Fire*
Enquirer 1st: *Return Fire*
Runner Up: *Space Hulk*
Reubus 1st: *Command and Conquer*
Runner Up: *Return Fire*
Shidoshi 1st: *Romance 4*
Runner Up: *Sim City 2000 PS*
Glitch 1st: *Blazing Heroes*
Runner Up: *Tecmo's Deception*
Knightmare 1st: *Command and Conquer*
Runner Up: *Space Hulk*
Waka 1st: *Tecmo's Deception*
Runner Up: *Romance 4*

STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR:
RETURN FIRE (PLAYSTATION)
Runner Up: TECMO'S DECEPTION

SIMULATION

E. Storm 1st: *Gun Griffon*
Runner Up: *Black Dawn (PS)*
Takuhi 1st: *Gun Griffon*
Nick Rox 1st: *Gun Griffon*
C. Hambleton 1st: *PilotWings 64*
Runner Up: *Gun Griffon*
Enquirer 1st: *PilotWings 64*
Runner Up: *Gun Griffon*
Reubus 1st: *Black Dawn (PS)*
Runner Up: *Bogey Dead 6*
Shidoshi 1st: *Gun Griffon*
Runner Up: *PilotWings 64*
Glitch 1st: *PilotWings 64*
Runner Up: *Black Dawn (PS)*
Knightmare 1st: *Gun Griffon*
Runner Up: *PilotWings 64*
Waka 1st: *PilotWings 64*
Runner Up: *Gun Griffon*

SIMULATION GAME OF THE YEAR:
GUN GRIFFON (SATURN)
Runner Up: PILOTWINGS 64

16-BIT

E. Storm 1st: *DKC 3*
Runner Up: *Virtua Fighter 2*
Takuhi 1st: *Virtua Fighter 2*
Runner Up: *Lufia 2*
Orion 1st: *Mario RPG*
Runner Up: *Lufia 2*
Nick Rox 1st: *Virtua Fighter 2*
Runner Up: *Lufia 2*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Tetris Attack*
Runner Up: *Virtua Fighter 2*
Enquirer 1st: *DK Country 3*
Runner Up: *Virtua Fighter 2*
Reubus 1st: *Kirby All Star*
Runner Up: *DK Country 3*
Shidoshi 1st: *Virtua Fighter 2*
Runner Up: *Kirby All Star*
Glitch 1st: *Sonic Blast*
Runner Up: *DK Country 3*
Knightmare 1st: *Sonic Blast*
Runner Up: *Virtua Fighter 2*
Waka 1st: *DK Country 3*
Runner Up: *Tetris Attack*

16-BIT GAME OF THE YEAR:
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 (GENESIS)
Runner Up: DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 3

ALTERNATIVE

E. Storm 1st: *Tail of the Sun*
Runner Up: *NiGHTS*
Takuhi 1st: *NiGHTS*
Nick Rox 1st: *NiGHTS*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Tail of the Sun*
Runner Up: *Aquanaut's Holiday*
Enquirer 1st: *Shadows of The Empire*
Runner Up: *NiGHTS*
Reubus 1st: *Tail of the Sun*
Runner Up: *Aquanaut's Holiday*
Shidoshi 1st: *NiGHTS*
Runner Up: *Mr. Bones*
Glitch 1st: *NiGHTS*
Runner Up: Christmas *NiGHTS*
Knightmare 1st: *NiGHTS*
Runner Up: *Christmas NiGHTS*
Waka 1st: *Tail of the Sun*
Runner Up: *NiGHTS*

ALTERNATIVE GAME OF THE YEAR:
NiGHTS (SATURN)
Runner Up: TAIL OF THE SUN

COIN-OP

E. Storm 1st: *Metal Slug*
Runner Up: *Manx TT Superbike*
Takuhi 1st: *Virtua Fighter 3*
Runner Up: *Last Bronx*
Nick Rox 1st: *Street Fighter Alpha 2*
Runner Up: *King of Fighters '96*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Virtua Fighter 3*
Runner Up: *Prop Cycle*
Enquirer 1st: *Virtua Fighter 3*
Runner Up: *Street Fighter Alpha 2*
Reubus 1st: *Street Fighter Alpha 2*
Runner Up: *Metal Slug*
Shidoshi 1st: *Samurai Shodown 4*
Runner Up: *AD&D 2*
Glitch 1st: *Street Fighter Alpha 2*
Runner Up: *Die Hard Arcade*
Knightmare 1st: *Virtual On*
Runner Up: *Virtua Fighter 3*
Waka 1st: *Tokyo Wars*
Runner Up: *Virtual On*

COIN-OP GAME OF THE YEAR: VIRTUA FIGHTER 3
Runner Up: STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

SIDE-SCROLLING ACTION

E. Storm 1st: *Guardian Heroes*
Runner Up: *Three Dirty Dwarves*
Takuhi 1st: *Guardian Heroes*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Guardian Heroes*
Runner Up: *Metal Slug*
Enquirer 1st: *Guardian Heroes*
Runner Up: *Three Dirty Dwarves*
Reubus 1st: *Metal Slug*
Runner Up: *Guardian Heroes*
Shidoshi 1st: *Metal Slug*
Runner Up: *Guardian Heroes*
Glitch 1st: *Guardian Heroes*
Runner Up: *Three Dirty Dwarves*
Knightmare 1st: *Guardian Heroes*
Runner Up: *Warriors of Fate 2*
Waka 1st: *Guardian Heroes*
Runner Up: *Warriors of Fate 2*

SIDE-SCROLLING GAME OF THE YEAR:
GUARDIAN HEROES
Runner Up: METAL SLUG

BEST STORY

E. Storm 1st: *Legend of Kain*
Runner Up: *Suikoden*
Takuhi 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Resident Evil*
Orion 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
Nick Rox 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Persona*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Samurai Shodown 3*
Enquirer 1st: *Tomb Raider*
Runner Up: *Shadows of The Empire*
Reubus 1st: *Tomb Raider*
Runner Up: *Shadows of The Empire*
Shidoshi 1st: *Mr. Bones*
Runner Up: *Resident Evil*
Glitch 1st: *Mr.Bones*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
Knightmare 1st: *Dark Savior*
Runner Up: *Shadows of The Empire*
Waka 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Legacy of Kain*

BEST GAME STORY OF THE YEAR:
SUIKODEN (PLAYSTATION)
Runner Up: LEGACY OF KAIN

SPECIAL EFFECTS

E. Storm 1st: *Mario 64*
Runner Up: *Crash Bandicoot*
Takuhi 1st: *Tomb Raider*
Runner Up: *Panzer Zwei*
Orion 1st: *Tomb Raider*
Runner Up: *Star Gladiator*
Nick Rox 1st: *Star Gladiator*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Wave Race 64*
Runner Up: *Mario 64*
Enquirer 1st: *Wave Race 64*
Runner Up: *Super Mario 64*
Reubus 1st: *Tunnel B1*
Runner Up: *Wipeout XL*
Shidoshi 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
Glitch 1st: *NiGHTS*
Runner Up: *Shadows of the Empire*
Knightmare 1st: *Mario 64*
Runner Up: *Crash Bandicoot*
Waka 1st: *Wave Race 64*
Runner Up: *Super Mario 64*

BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS OF THE YEAR:
SUPER MARIO 64
Runner Up: TOMB RAIDER



(continued on page 36)

SOUNDTRACK
E. Storm 1st: *Guardian Heroes*
Runner Up: *Sonic Blast*
Takuhi 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Panzer Zwei*
Orion 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Nick Rox 1st: *Suikoden*
Runner Up: *Tobal No. 1*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Enquirer 1st: *Wipeout XL*
Runner Up: *Tekken 2*
Reubus 1st: *Jet Moto*
Runner Up: *Wipeout XL*
Shidoshi 1st: *Samurai Shodown 4*
Runner Up: *Suikoden*
Glitch 1st: *NiGHTS*
Runner Up: *Sonic Blast*
Knightmare 1st: *NiGHTS*
Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Waka 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Suikoden*

BEST SOUNDTRACK OF THE YEAR: SUIKODEN (PLAYSTATION)
Runner Up: TEKKEN 2

BEST USE OF CG/FMV
E. Storm 1st: *Tomb Raider*
Runner Up: *Legacy of Kain*
Takuhi 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Guardian Heroes*
Orion 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
Nick Rox 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Tobal No. 1*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Legacy of Kain*
Enquirer 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
Reubus 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Pandemonium*
Shidoshi 1st: *Pandemonium*
Runner Up: *Tekken 2*
Glitch 1st: *NiGHTS*
Runner Up: *Virtua Fighter Kids*
Knightmare 1st: *NiGHTS*
Runner Up: *Tekken 2*
Waka 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Legacy of Kain*

BEST USE OF FMV/CG OF THE YEAR: TEKKEN 2 (PLAYSTATION)
Runner Up: LEGACY OF KAIN

SPORTS
E. Storm 1st: *CoolBoarders*
Runner Up: *In the Zone 2*
C. Hambleton 1st: *WW Soccer '97*
Runner Up: *CoolBoarders*
Enquirer 1st: *Power Move Wrestling*
Runner Up: *Madden '97*
Reubus 1st: *CoolBoarders*
Runner Up: *V Tennis*
Shidoshi 1st: *Ten Pin Alley*
Runner Up: *WW Soccer '97*
Glitch 1st: *Madden '97*
Runner Up: *WW Soccer '97*
Knightmare 1st: *WW Soccer '97*
Runner Up: *Madden '97*
Waka 1st: *CoolBoarders*
Runner Up: *Power Move Wrestling*

BEST SPORTS GAME OF THE YEAR: WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97 (SATURN)
Runner Up: COOLBOARDERS

IMPORT (games not scheduled for US release only)
E. Storm 1st: *Enemy Zero*
Runner Up: *Keio Yu Gekitai*
Takuhi 1st: *Enemy Zero*
Runner Up: *Treasure Hunter G*
Nick Rox 1st: *Enemy Zero*
Runner Up: *Nonomura Byoin no Hitobito*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Wipeout (UK)*
Runner Up: *Treasure Hunter G*
Enquirer 1st: *Enemy Zero*
Runner Up: *Sexy Parodius*
Reubus 1st: *Choro Q*
Runner Up: *Smash Court*
Shidoshi 1st: *Princess Maker 2*
Runner Up: *Wonder Project J2*
Glitch 1st: *Keio Yu Gekitai*
Runner Up: *Dezaemon Plus*
Knightmare 1st: *Enemy Zero*
Runner Up: *Incredible Toons*
Waka 1st: *Dragon Ball Z Legends (PS)*
Runner Up: *Twilight Syndrome*

BEST IMPORT ONLY GAME OF THE YEAR: ENEMY ZERO
Runner Up: KEIO YU GEKITAI

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT
E. Storm 1st: *Demise of Virtual Boy*
Runner Up: *Yuji Naka making NiGHTS instead of a 32-bit Sonic*
Takuhi 1st: *Numerous Super NES games lost forever in Japan*
Runner Up: *Nintendo 64 launch*
Nick Rox 1st: *Numerous SNES games lost forever in Japan*
Runner Up: *Lack of 2D games*
C. Hambleton 1st: *N64 sound capabilities*
Runner Up: *Saturn Daytona CCE 3D pop-up*
Enquirer 1st: *Only eight games for N64*
Runner Up: *No M2 this year*
Reubus 1st: *VMX delayed*
Runner Up: *N64 game delays*
Glitch 1st: *No Phantasy Star*
Runner Up: *No Bare Knuckle*
Knightmare Lack of N64 software
Runner Up: *No one but me (sob!) understood NiGHTS*
Waka 1st: *FFVII pushed back a month*
Runner Up: *Lack of PS peripherals*

HIGH POINT OF THE YEAR
E. Storm 1st: *The Nintendo 64!!!*
Runner Up: *The Sony PS giving me a year to remember!*
Takuhi 1st: *FFVII comes to the PlayStation*
Runner Up: *Hot Saturn Model 2 translations*
Nick Rox 1st: *Street Fighter 3 is 2D!*
Runner Up: *Capcom rules!*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Namco PlayStation conversions*
Runner Up: *Nintendo 64 launch*
Enquirer 1st: *Nintendo 64 launch*
Runner Up: *How shockingly good Tomb Raider is*
Reubus 1st: *Nintendo 64 launch*
Runner Up: *Beating Jet Moto (without codes)*
Shidoshi 1st: *SNK gave me back Charlotte*
Runner Up: *Sony's change of attitude*
Glitch 1st: *N64 delivers true 3D*
Runner Up: *Sega's X-Mas Nights giveaway*
Dan 1st: *Super Mario 64 showed the way*
Runner Up: *Hot Saturn Model 2 translations*
Waka 1st: *FFVII demo*
Runner Up: *Square diversifying*

GAME OF THE YEAR 1996
E. Storm 1st: *Tomb Raider*
Runner Up: *Super Mario 64*
Takuhi 1st: *Resident Evil*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
Orion 1st: *Resident Evil*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
Nick Rox 1st: *Resident Evil*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
C. Hambleton 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
Enquirer 1st: *Super Mario 64*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
Reubus 1st: *Super Mario 64*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
Shidoshi 1st: *Resident Evil*
Runner Up: *Samurai Shodown 4*
Glitch 1st: *NiGHTS*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
Knightmare 1st: *NiGHTS*
Runner Up: *Mario 64*
Waka 1st: *Tekken 2*
Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*





THE TOP FIVE GAMEFAN GAMES OF 1996
1. TOMB RAIDER
2. RESIDENT EVIL
3. SUPER MARIO 64
3. NiGHTS
5. TEKKEN 2



Proof That Demons Do Exist

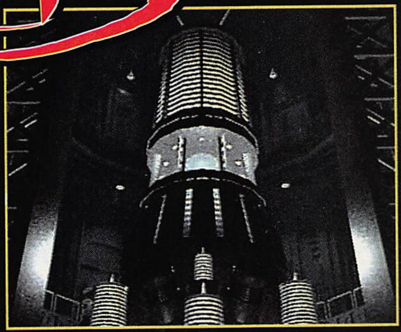
In the near future, mankind has conquered dimensional travel but the door we have opened swings both ways. The peaceful city you have grown up in has become a haven for dark creatures from another world— Demons! Now it's up to you and your friends to harness the hidden power within you by entering the fantasy game known as Persona.

You awaken with incredible abilities that you will need to defeat the scores of Demon invaders and cleanse the land of their forces. Converse with them before doing battle to determine your best course of action. Fight them or enlist their aid in your mission. Either way, you are set for the fantasy adventure of a lifetime!

Special Features

- Based on the ultra-popular, mega-hit, Megami Tensei series: first time to hit US shores
- 100+ hours of pulse pounding gameplay
- Over 300 different monsters to do battle with
- Morph any member of your party into a more powerful source known as "Persona"
- Fight your way to one of many endings

Persona™





Use your "Persona"







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RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Persona™ is the first chapter of the REVELATIONS™ SERIES

RPG

PlayStation™

CONGRATULATIONS!

As we closed this year's awards, many great games came in that we were dying to throw into the mix that either haven't been released over here yet, or are due next year. Look for them in the 1997 Megawards. Here they are so you know what to keep an eye out for early on in '97: *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* (N64), *Shining the Holy Ark* (Saturn), *Mario Kart 64* (N64), *Soul Edge* (PS) and *Fighters Megamix* (Saturn). The way things are going, 1997 should be another year packed with non-stop entertainment.

JUST A FEW OF THIS YEAR'S MEGAWARDS WINNERS...



SUPER MARIO 64



CRASH BANDICOOT



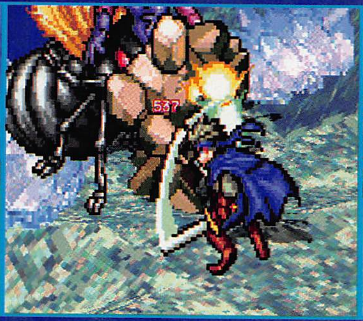
GUARDIAN HEROES



POWERSLAVE



WAVERACE



SUIKODEN



VIRTUA FIGHTER 3



WIPEOUT XL



SF ALPHA 2



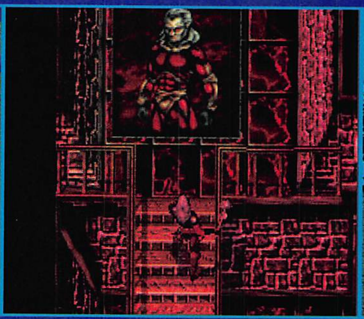
TEKKEN 2



NIGHTS



FIGHTING VIPERS



LEGACY OF KAIN



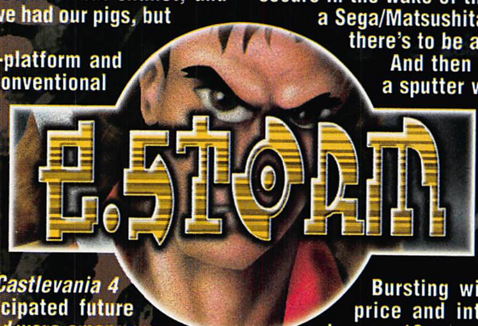
WORLD WIDE SOCCER



BEYOND OASIS

EDITORS' YEAR IN REVIEW '96

After twelve months that flew by like 6, here's what some of GameFan's most prominent editors had to say about one of gaming's hottest and most eventful years...

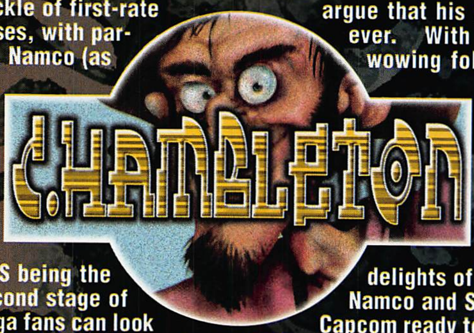


I had more fun this year than should be legal. The race for next-gen supremacy between Sony and Sega resulted in a steady flow of quality software. I'm hard pressed to remember a day in '96 when I didn't have something to play. The dry spells that so plagued sixteen-bit seem all but extinct, and shamelessly bad games are at an all time low. Sure, we had our pigs, but the pen wasn't nearly as full as it's been in the past.

Early on I had concerns in regards to the action-platform and adventure platforms. Unwilling to part with the conventional scheme (hand drawn-side scrolling), the whole 3D thing had me worried. How would companies capture the complexity, personality, and accurate gameplay in a polygonal environment? My fears have been laid to rest however as *Super Mario 64*, *Crash Bandicoot*, and *Tomb Raider* answered all of those questions. Those titles being first generation I look forward with burning anticipation to '97's sequels and new like titles. Not that I'm about to surrender 2D, no way; *Castlevania 4* and *Mega Man 8* are among my most eagerly anticipated future titles and *Clockwork Knight 2* and *Hermie Hopperhead* were among my favorite games in the past year. '96 saw every genre represented. Racing, Role Playing, Shooting, Action Role Playing, and 3D corridor were all covered, some beyond my expectations. I entered '96 with apprehension and emerged more enthused and optimistic than I've ever been about video games. 1997 is destined to become yet another banner year. We'll finally see Matsushita's mighty M2, by mid year. While the M2 spec-wise is the Goliath of all consoles it will be interesting to see the amount of 3rd-party support they'll be able to secure in the wake of three major platforms already in full swing. Rumors of a Sega/Matsushita joint effort have been circulating for some time. If there's to be a major announcement in '97, this will be it.

And then of course, there's the N64. The launch was more of a sputter with only two games, but in terms of hardware it was a mammoth event. The burning question is, will 3rd party software burn with the intensity of those blessed by the almighty Shigeru Miyamoto? If they do, and there's enough of them to fill in the cracks between Nintendo exclusives, Nintendo may again re-write video game history.

And finally, my two gripes in regards to '96. One, Nintendo's early burial of the Virtual Boy. Bursting with possibility, Nintendo, rather than lowering the price and introducing more software (which they easily could have – 10 games remain on the unknown list in Japan) they just tanked it. Uncharacteristic, to say the least. And two, no one ever did pick up *Hermie Hopperhead*, the *Super Mario World* clone with massive depth and personality to burn. Otherwise, '96 was a year I'll never forget.



This has been the most exciting year in video game history. The reasons? Well, let's start with the advent of the new video game world order for starters. The success of the Sony PlayStation has surprised even the most vehement Nintendo and Sega fans, and has helped the growth of quality games the world over. The trickle of first-rate titles has now turned into a torrent of fine releases, with particular gems coming in from Psygnosis, Capcom, Namco (as you'd expect) and even small third parties like Core. Now more than a year in from its US launch, gamers across the States and beyond now enjoy games on the Sony console that were mere dreams before.

Of course, Sega haven't been sitting around either, and once they delivered a triple helping of fantastic arcade port-overs, they concentrated on delivering a ton of great releases, with NiGHTS being the obvious jewel in the crown. Now at last, the second stage of arcade port-overs have graced the Saturn, and Sega fans can look forward to great versions of *Virtua Cop 2*, *Virtual On* and *Daytona Championship Edition*. With a constant stream of third party support (look no further than *Powerslave* for evidence of their greatness), and you have a formidable force in the console wars.

Finally, the great lumbering beast known as Nintendo finally granted gamers with the first truly astounding glimpse into the future. *Mario* has offended Italians throughout the world, but no one can argue that his new adventure is the most amazing video game ever. With the seminal *Pilotwings* following, *WaveRace* wowing folks across the globe and future releases set to send gamers into a frenzy, Nintendo has returned to reclaim their throne... will they succeed? You're about to find out...

Finally, any self-respecting gamer knows the birth of future top-selling releases usually begins in the arcade, and 1996 was no exception. The launch of *Tekken 2* was supplemented by *Soul Edge*, while the Sega camp gave us the delights of *Gunblade* and *Virtua Fighter 3*. 1997 starts with Namco and Sega fiercely contesting their arcade might, with Capcom ready to pounce with the legendary *Street Fighter 3*, and SNK continuing to produce bigger and better sequels to their already awesome repertoire. Just think; this time next year, you'll be playing *Street Fighter 3* in the home... The future's looking very bright indeed!



1996 was truly a good year for gaming. The Saturn and PlayStation finally hit their stride, and pumped out a dozen or so truly great games. The total amount of games released this year was pretty small, but quality standards are getting higher, and we've finally seen the birth of a couple of new-to-32-bit genres. Anyway, let's run down this years trends:

Quality Western Games: Hey, though there still aren't too incredibly many of them, a small handful of games, such as *Tomb Raider*, *Crash Bandicoot*, *Jet-Moto*, *Warhawk*, and *Wipeout XL*, finally make me feel proud to be... um... occidental.

Millions of Great Super Famicom Games We'll Never Play: Okay, maybe not millions. Maybe it's more like ten. But those were ten GREAT games! *Tenchi Sozo*, *Tactics Ogre*, *Final Fantasy V*... the *Romancing Saga* series, *Treasure Hunter G*... Great, great games. The height of 16-bit quality. And now all hope of ever seeing them is lost. Oh, the pain... I wouldn't feel so bad about it if Square, the company who made more than half of those masterpieces, had stood up and promised it would never happen again, but that's not looking too likely. I want commitments, written in the blood of their top executives, that we're getting *Final Fantasy Tactics* AND *Saga Frontier*. Hrmph.

The Nintendo 64: On the one hand, Nintendo does deserve some accolades for not rushing out a bunch of half-finished games, even though the pressure to do so must have been enormous. On the other hand, what the hell? How could the company that dominated video games for so many years suffer such an incredibly deep game shortage? Are they even trying to get some 3rd party support together? Why don't they hire some more people so they can actually release more than three games a year themselves?

The M2: Isn't it funny the way that we know absolutely nothing more about the M2 than we did at this same time last year?

Well, that's my little "year in review." There were definitely some sore points in '96, but I'm a happy man overall. Here's hoping for even better times in '97.



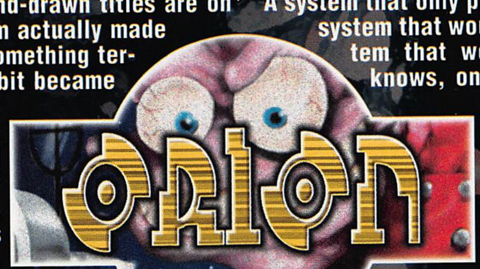
1996 can be considered the first 'true' year of the next generation. By the end of the first quarter, Jaguar and 3DO were dead, PlayStation had found its footing and Saturn had proved it was capable of staying in the race with its impressive second wave of software. The N64 was looming on the horizon for a September release, and the scene was set for a fierce battle between Sony, Sega and Nintendo.

The battle of the three systems became the battle of the three mascots. The inspired *Crash Bandicoot*, revolutionary *Mario 64* and magical *NiGHTS* all clashed on the shelves, fighting for market share. All three games were exceptional, pushing their respective systems to glorious new heights, but in this race quality counts for little, and public opinion is everything. When the dust settled, PlayStation had taken a firm lead in both America and Japan, N64 had smashed all records for launch sales and Sega was relegated to third place.

In the arcades, Model 3 finally made its American debut, bringing a new level of realism to polygon graphics, while Capcom's CPS 3 did the same thing for 2D. The lead time between arcade and home conversions dropped even more (*SFA2*'s was eight months), and Sega continued to prove that no Model 2 coin-op was too powerful to fit onto the Saturn.

If one genre characterized 1996, it was the 3D beat-'em-up. *Tekken 2, Soul Edge, VF3, Fighting Vipers, Last Bronx, Star Gladiators* – even Square jumped on the bandwagon with *Tobal No. 1.* 1996 took the fighting game into the third dimension, along with every other game genre, and for the first time polygons became more common than sprites.

1996 was an exciting year. We saw the death of 16-bit, the growth of 32-bit and the birth of 64-bit. There have been ups and downs, winners and losers, casualties and tragedies, but above all, there have been some really, really great games. We're coming out of the 16-bit slump and entering a newer, brighter era for gaming. There's never been a better time for the industry, and there's never been a better time to be a GameFan.



1996, while an amazing year for games, was also deeply depressing. This was the year everything changed. This was the year a powerful new system arrived, while many others left (or are leaving) the race. This was the year texture-mapped polygons achieved a solid foothold, nearly guaranteeing 2D hand-drawn titles are on the way out. This was even the year Capcom actually made a 3D fighting game, which I'm sure means something terrible. And the worst, this was the year 32-bit became the standard, leaving my once-beloved 16-bit soon to be extinct. I hate change.

Anyway, enough complaining. 1996 had some outstanding games, perhaps some of the best ever. The PlayStation was amazing, giving us simply indescribably cool titles like *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil. Suikoden*, easily the best 32-bit RPG ever finally hit our shores. *Crash Bandicoot* was hyper cool, the perfect combination of incredible graphics and bitchin' 8-bit style platform gameplay. And you can't forget Namco's groovy additions to the PlayStation's '96 lineup with *Tekken 2* and *Ridge Racer Revolution*. With these kinds of games, there's no doubt why the PlayStation is number one...

The Saturn also had a great year, if only for its 1st party games. *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* was stunningly beautiful, *NiGHTS* was a great experience, and *Virtua Cop 2* let you shoot people. Capcom and Working Designs helped a bit, but where's the rest of the 3rd party support?

The Nintendo 64 was originally made out to be the super-system. A system that only produced quality games, and plenty of them. A system that would make us totally forget about 32-bit. A system that would end worldwide famine. As everyone knows, only 2 games hit on launch, the other systems still look great, and people are still hungry. *Mario* was fun for the first time through, but the other available games leave something to be desired. I'm sure next year's software lineup will be better.

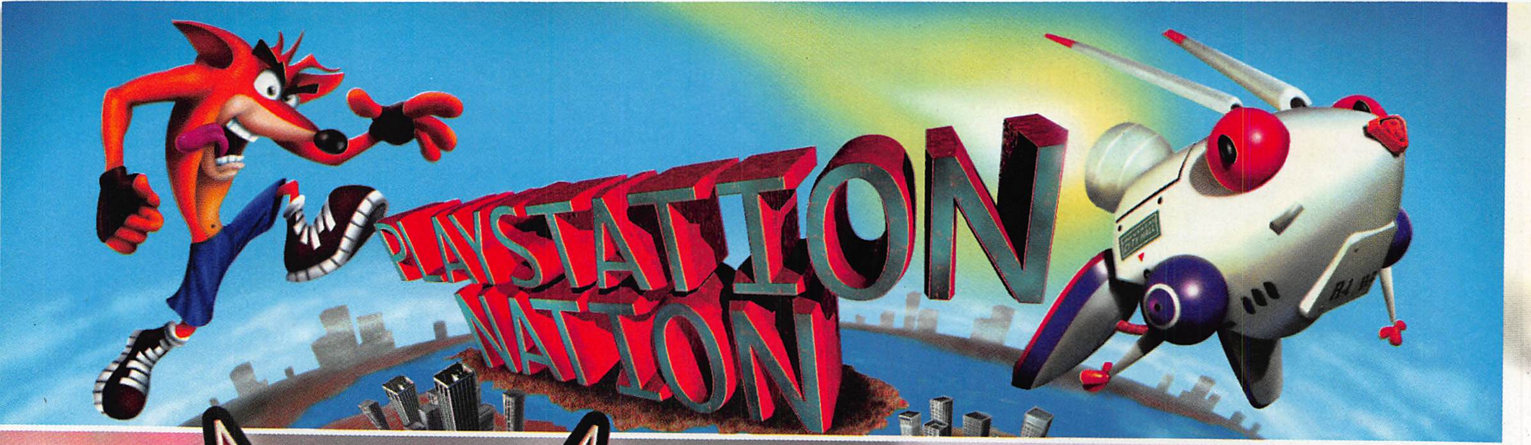
As expected, this was the worst year 16-bit's ever had. This is the end of the line for my once favorite systems, sniff... I'm sure I'll get over it... It's just, I feel bad for us Americans. There were so many great Japanese games that never came out this year, no *Tenchi Sozo*, no new Square titles, no *Tactics Ogre*. But hey, we had hot American games like *Mohawk and Headphone Jack*, and *that's* what counts. Yeah!

Well, you made it through Orion's Year End Review Rant. Thanks for reading the entire thing, I'm proud of you! Now go out and spread my wisdom amongst your friends... Excelsior!



It seems that everyone else is using this space to sound off on, among other things, Sony, Sega and Nintendo's spot in the marketplace. I guess that is the technical meaning of a "year in review," but I'm going to address what I feel was the most profound gaming trend in '96: the virtual disappearance of hand-drawn games. Compare the ratio of polygonal games in our Megwards - it's about 3:1! And these were selected by a staff that's (half of us, anyway) in love with 2D games. And even when companies like Capcom (*gods*), SNK, Konami and fringe dwellers like Treasure craft sparkling hand-drawn games, the modern gamer doesn't like 'em. Well, some people, *cool* people do, I guess. But the majority of video game players associate hand-drawn graphics with tired, old systems, and glitchy polygons with the future. Don't get me wrong, though – I love 3D games, too. As much as any of you. Yet my heart lies with 2D. When Capcom, the last bastion of hand-drawn goodness, announced *Star Gladiator* and (choke!) *Street Fighter EX* this year, a part of my gaming soul, well... died. That probably sounds pretty extreme, but perhaps you don't understand the preternatural psychic *bond* I have with all that which is Capcom. (Uh, after reading that last sentence you must truly think I'm completely off my rocker...) These 3-D games, however brilliant they are technically, just shouldn't come from Capcom! It's a travesty! Murder of ideals! It'll put your eye out! Well, maybe not, but... Oh, wait! And *Mario*! Sure, we all know it's a godly game and everyone will be copying it for the next several years, but... but it should have been 2D! Hey, wait... where are you all going? Come back here!

Damn! That rant ended perfectly and only 300 words! Um, um... read it again! Er, more room... uh... OK, I'll have to reneg on my earlier statement and do what everyone else did. In a nutshell: PlayStation – it rocked. Three titles are all I need to mention here: *Resident Evil, Suikoden, Tomb Raider*. Saturn – it was cool. Lots of neat games, but unfortunately none with the epic qualities of the above- mentioned PS trio. N64: Three games. One rocked. 'Nuff said. Other stuff: Not enough RPGs. Beyond-hot '95-'96 Japanese SFC games will never see the light of day here. OK... I've finally reached the end of this box! Whee!



RAGE RACER

R REVIEW

PlayStation

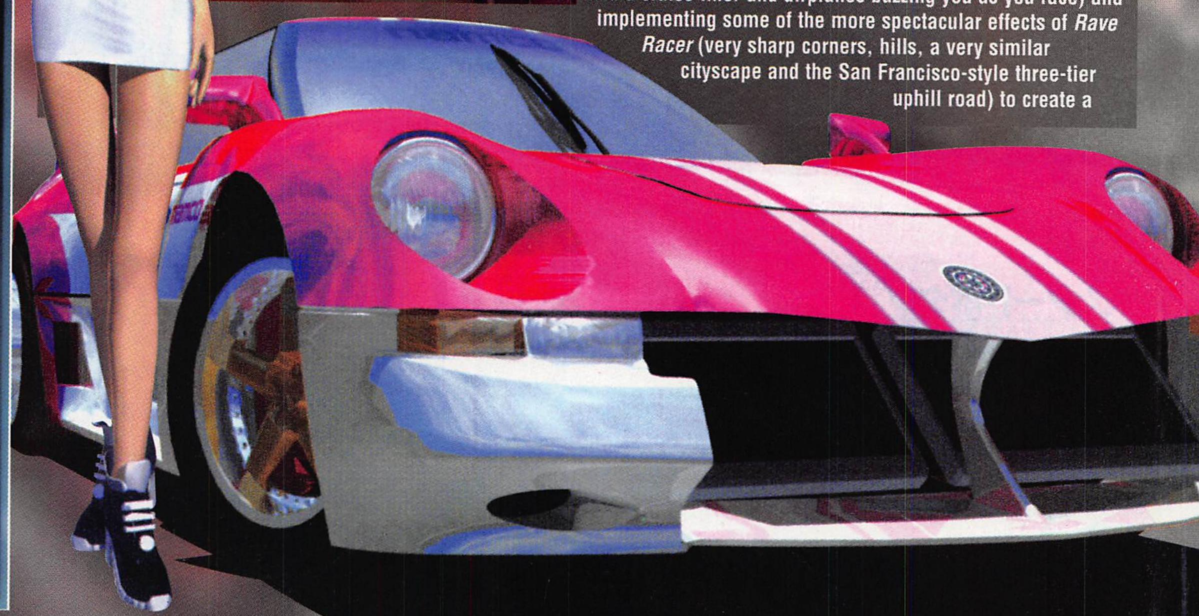
- DEVELOPER - NAMCO
- PUBLISHER - NAMCO
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



CHIEF HAMBLETON
WELL, HELLO!
A FANCY LADY!



I was expecting some pretty awesome seat-of-my-pants arcade style racing from the Namco developers; simply because the game in question was the next big racing title to hit the PlayStation. From the game that sold the Sony machine (*Ridge Racer*) to the phenomenal adrenaline rush of the follow-up which offered more of everything (*Ridge Racer Revolution*), there's been something special, nay magical, about Namco's offerings. Now, after quite a period, the coin-op (and now PlayStation) giants are set to stomp into view once more; waving and enticing you with two unbelievable video games. One of these is the next in the *Ridge Racer* license to print money: the souped-up, turbo-injected *Rage Racer*. So, is this a worthy inclusion into any self-respecting gamer's Namco shrine, or another *Cybersled*? Let's pull up to the starting line and rev our engines to find out more...



The first big improvement has to be the introduction; you've got a mish-mash of cool and crazy images, from unbelievably realistic CG cars tearing around a trackway to Reiko Nagase (the all-new Namco lady announcer) sat astride a throbbing motor, beckoning you with a knowing glance, pout and a wink ("u-huh-huh-huh..."). This has the usual quality of a Namco introduction (i.e.; it's awesome), and with a suitably pumpin' techno anthem pounding away in the background, it is a perfect way of attracting you to the game at hand. Then, you're greeted by the *Rage Racer* title screen and a choice of Grand Prix, Time Trial, Control and Option modes.



Of course, not being a NeGcon man myself (I left that analog feel to those who prefer it, like the Roxman), I hastily negotiated the options screen and prepared for the new circuits. As you can probably guess, a variety of courses isn't what's on offer here; there's essentially one raceway divided into four separate tracks; not the 15 courses some of the more optimistic editors craved. But no matter, because the circuits on offer are the best you've ever seen; taking all the best features from past *Ridge Racer*s (a beach front with cafes, yachts and a cruise liner and airplanes buzzing you as you race) and implementing some of the more spectacular effects of *Rave Racer* (very sharp corners, hills, a very similar cityscape and the San Francisco-style three-tier uphill road) to create a





breathtaking trip into arcade racing.

Anyone who even remotely considers themselves a gamer should know of the control system for *Rage Racer* from previous experience; you shift gears, powerslide around corners and bumping into the sides of the track nudges you back into play. This isn't your full-on simulation *F1*-type affair; more like an intense arcade experience testing your car-handling skills to the very limits. This time around however, you'll be amazed at just how realistic the texture maps that adorn all the scenery look; there's obviously been some major programming going into this game. The result? Greek temple ruins, a small fishing harbor with lighthouse, and tracks that wrap around so that you can see other cars racing far away into the distance. The cool thing is, this remains at a super-smooth 30 fps and never slows down. Ever. Oh yes, I was excited. And then I discovered the cars.



Thirteen racing vehicles await the *Rage Racer*. To start with, you're treated to a slow lumbering box-car beast, but with perseverance, you'll obtain a cool Mini Clubman-like car (nippy but lacking power), a dragster convertible (oh, yeah!) and even a chrome low-rider truck (check that acceleration!). Once certain obligations have been met, you're eventually allowed to race the *Rage Racer* version of the Devil Car, a purple monstrosity with a massive top speed of 374 kph! This goes so fast that the road texture-maps play tricks on your eyes and actually look like they're moving backwards! This is just how fast this game is!





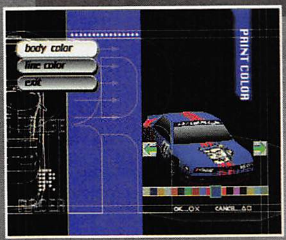


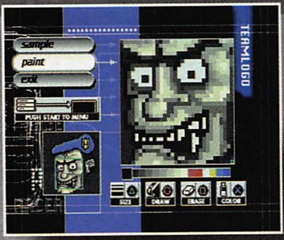
There's also much more longevity this time around. Aside from the four different courses, there's the opportunity to race them backwards, choose whether your car grips or slides, and the best bit; adding your own decals to the hood of your racer! As you can see from the screenshots, ol' Chief Hambleton's been busy painting his mutated visage on all his roadsters, and you can also change your racing stripes and main body color to any you desire. And that's just the beginning...

There's eleven cups to race for in total; five forward, five backward and one featuring the three hyper-secret vehicles. Each cup is divided into three or four races, with the points you receive after each win accumulating so that you're able to either upgrade your car to the next level, or buy another brand new motor. Now you're encouraged to race for better vehicles and faster courses; a brilliant incentive and excellent fun as well. Of course, the track has been designed in such a way that there's no pop-up, a multitude of tight corners and very, *very* steep hills to rocket up or down. So now, instead of powersliding around every corner, you're actually encouraged to brake and turn; making the whole process more like a racing season while still retaining all the arcade-style tactics and adrenaline-soaked rides.

Of course, this wouldn't be a Namco racer without pumpin' techno anthems, and *Rage Racer* supplies nine of these (plus one hidden!). Although not as instantly cool as *Rare Hero* or *Maximum Zone*, they really do grow on you and incorporate more styles; from drum n' bass to jazz. Oh, and don't tell anyone, but they've sampled The Prodigy, er, *prodigiously* this time around (along with Dreadzone, Rotterdam Termination Source... you know the drill). Space permits me from informing you of what happened when we collected our eleventh gold cup, or why original *Ridge Racer* Ryukyu cars were seen in some later cups. What I can tell you is that Namco has spent considerable time perfecting the ultimate driving circuit and it's definitely paid off.

Certain other, er, *seasoned* video game hacks may groan and say it's all been done before. You know what Hambleton says? Stuff 'em: For those craving excitement in their games and need their daily fix of intense speed like no other game (this even blows away the previous champion, *WipeOut XL*), you have and must obtain *Rage Racer* as soon as humanly possible. This is quite possibly the greatest racing game on the planet; the piteous shambling tragedy that is *Cruis'n USA* shouldn't even be mentioned in the same issue, never mind the same article. Sony should be very proud and honored to have such developers working on their machine, and every Namco fan should rejoice; this is pure gaming excellence... again. *CH*







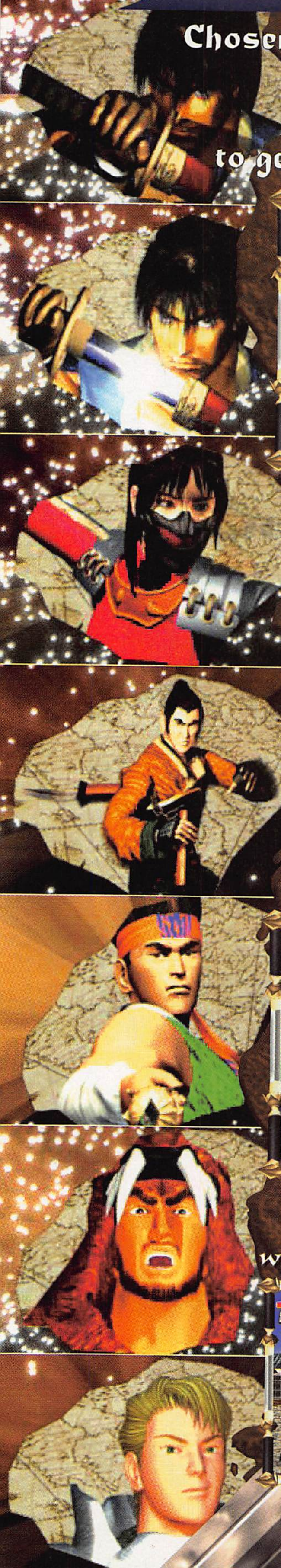


Tune-up, change body color, and even design your own car logos! Make sure to keep an eye out for your masterpieces during the grueling race!

A nitro burning high octane adrenaline rush to the checkered flag!

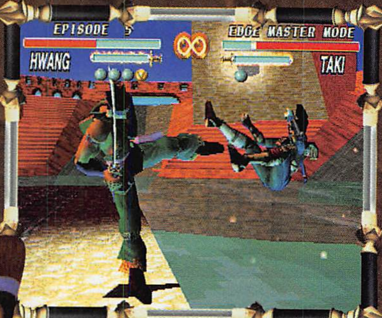
SOUL BLADE

Chosen by history, persons become soldiers.
Engraved in history, individuals become heroes.
The story of swords and souls transmitted from generation to generation surpassing time and world.









After recovering from the rush of *Rage Racer*, another shiny silver bundle of CD joy from Namco landed in my lap. This must be my lucky month; not only do I get to play the best console racing game ever seen, but I also witness the next fighting game from Namco. Forget your *Toshindens* and *Criticoms*; this is how a weapons-based fighting game should look!

Without a doubt the most stunning graphical fighting feast ever to grace any console, *Soul Edge* (Japan), or *Soul Blade* (US) is the next PlayStation game that you simply must go out of your way to purchase. Fans of fighting games (2D or 3D) will be in ecstatic glee when they obtain their copy of this Namco masterpiece, and with good reason; this is the first game which is actually superior than the arcade version!

First, let's talk about that







CERVANTES DE LEON – THE WRECK OF PROUD MANHOOD

WEAPON – THE EVIL SWORD 'SOUL EDGE' FIGHTING STYLE – LET THE SWORD BE

















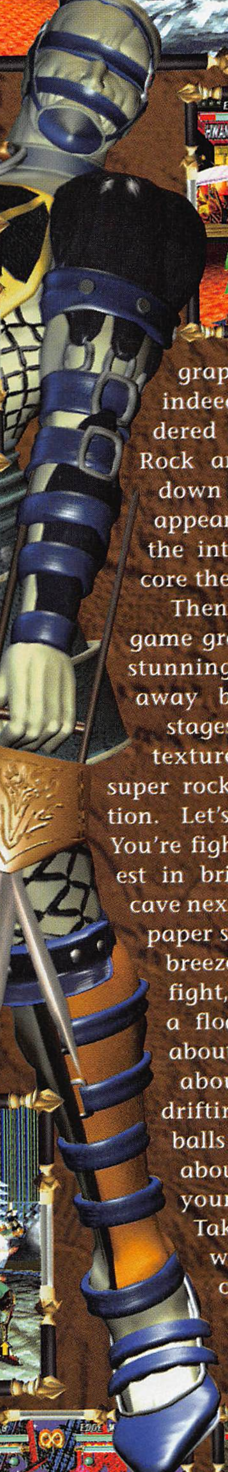


VOLDO - THE LAST LUNATIC

WEAPON - 'KATAR' HAND MOUNTED BLADES

FIGHTING STYLE - FREESTYLE

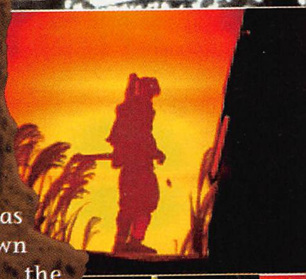
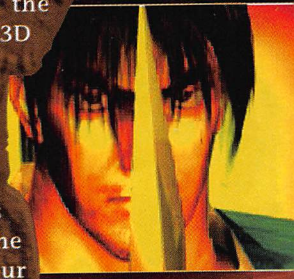


introduction. Never, ever has there been CG intro like it. It betters *Tekken 2*, *Wipeout XL*; indeed any game you care to mention. Nick Rox had to be stretchered out after viewing only half of it. In it, Mitsurugi strikes two foes in a corn-field during sunset, and the effect is real. Li Long stands on a raft as it flows along a river winding along a deep ravine. And Taki leaps about an emperor's castle, throwing down fluorescent runes and destroying a hideous devil samurai. Nothing you've seen will prepare you for this graphical masterpiece; indeed, Namco has rendered an entire valley for Rock and his child to look down upon which only appears for two seconds in the intro; this is how hard-core the introduction is!

Then you'll find that the in-game graphics are also nearly as stunning and you'll be blown away by the light-sourcing, the stages made entirely from 3D textured polygons and the super rock-steady 30 fps animation. Let's take a random stage: You're fighting in a bamboo forest in bright sunlight, a small cave next to the ring, and various paper symbols are blowing in the breeze. Halfway through your fight, the light darkens to night; a floating ghostly head flits about in the cave, spirits fly about the arena, and drifting, will-o-the-wisp balls of green light flicker about the playing field; as your fight continues. Take it from me, you won't even have come close to seeing this type of graphical perfection on the PlayStation before.




PERFECT YOUR FIGHTING SKILLS!

7 INCREDIBLE BATTLE MODES TO CHOOSE!





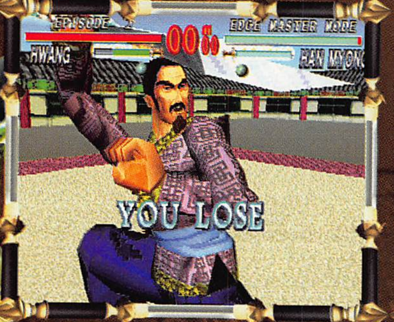


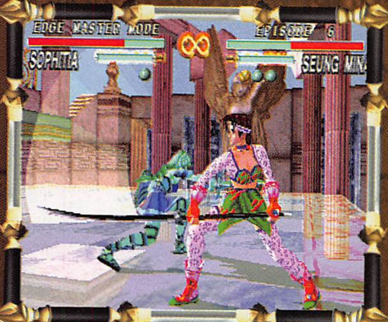


















So the graphics are great, huh? Well, the game itself is also pretty damn special; you've got a whole host of characters, playing identically to *Soul Edge Ver. II* (arcade) and indeed *Star Gladiator*, with two weapon attack buttons, a kick and a block. Now I'm not a block man myself ("Get thee behind me, *Mortal Kombat*!"), but the 3D nature of the battles lends itself more to this style of blocking... and once you get used to it, it works well. Another excellent feature is the durability of your weapon; keep chipping away at a blocking character and you'll wear his weapon down until you disarm him. Now you can wade in and hack to your heart's content!

This is pretty much identical to *Soul Edge Ver. II*, with ring outs only if you float an opponent and a great narration at the end of each bout ("The epic battle ended with the victory of..."). However, this has the added benefit of increased details on some stages (water on the Li Long raft stage for example), all the modes present in *Tekken 2* (Practice, Survival, Time Attack, Team Battle), as well as Edge Master Mode, where an epic series of plot-based fights await you.







Of the characters; Cervantes and Hwang are playable, Soul Edge himself looks totally cool and there's five different costumes and up to four different endings for each character (which aren't CG, they're real-time). We've also found (but not played as) two hidden characters (Tanegashima with a bow and arrow) and Han Myong (the master of Hwang), and are awaiting confirmation about rumors of a third... These



SIEGFRIED - GERMAN SWORDSLINGER
WEAPON - 'ZWEI-HANDER' TWO-HANDED SWORD
FIGHTING STYLE - FREESTYLE

PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NAMCO	# OF PLAYERS - NAMCO
PUBLISHER - NAMCO	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



CHIEF HAMBLETON
Cutting edge of PlayStation software.





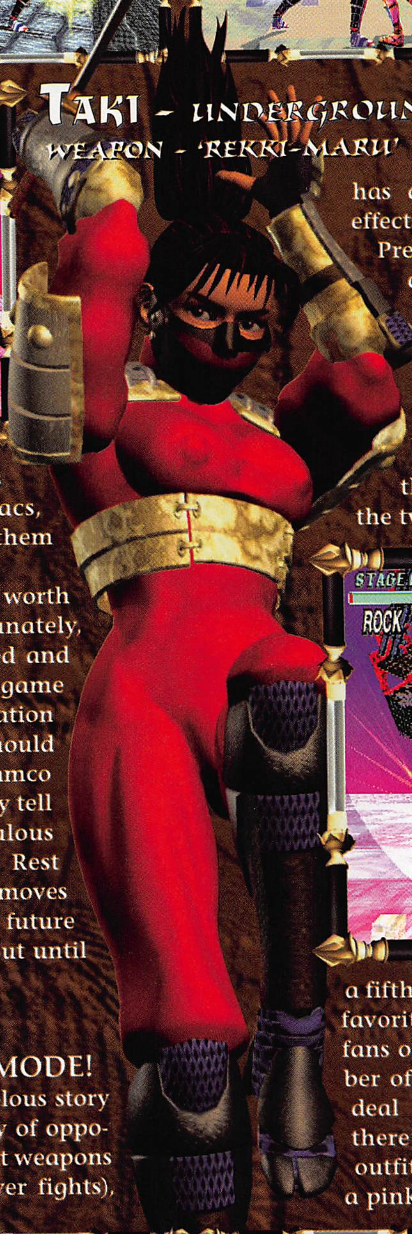






new characters look just a good as the main katana-wielding maniacs, and the narrator even announces them as a "Guest Fighter"!

Pre-order your copy now. This is worth paying just for the intro. Fortunately, Namco has included a fully-rounded and phenomenally playable fighting game into the bargain. This is the PlayStation conversion of the century; Sony should thank their lucky stars they have Namco on their team... You can immediately tell just how much time and meticulous effort has been spent on this. Rest assured, we'll bring you the secrets, moves and everything you'll ever need in future issues of GameFan and MegaFan. But until then... *En garde*! ***CH***



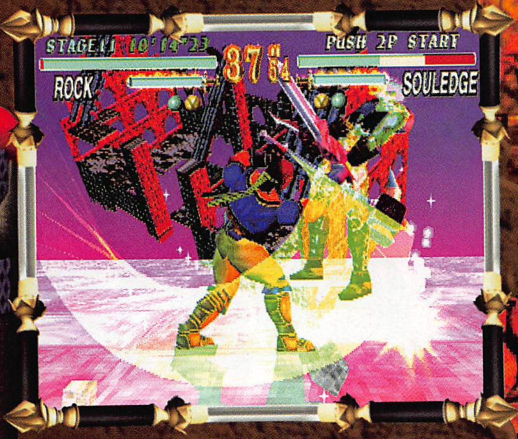
TAKI - UNDERGROUND HUNTER
WEAPON - 'REKKI-MARU' FIGHTING STYLE - TOKI

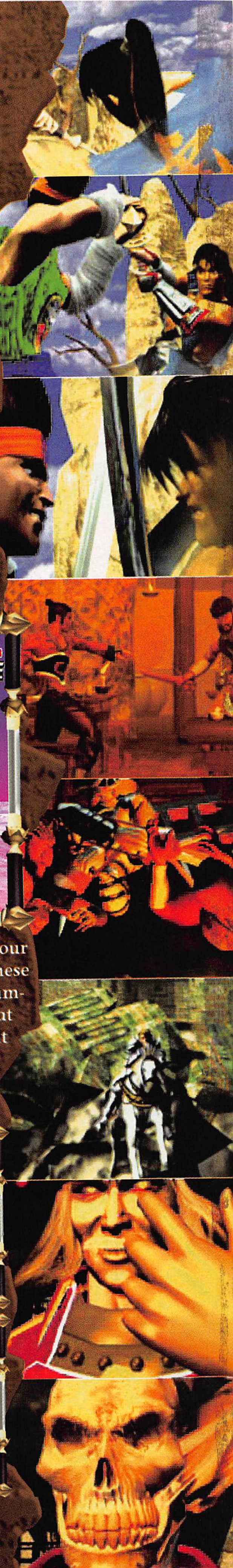
NEW - THE EDGE MASTER MODE!

As you progress through this marvelous story mode, you'll be up against a variety of opponents in your quest for eight different weapons (all which can be used in two-player fights), and each fight will be under different conditions (you're poisoned, you fight three characters one at a time; you get the picture). This is just great, and guaranteed to keep you hooked for days. Each weapon has different attributes and this effects every fight in numerous ways. Pretty awesome stuff... especially as the total number of weapons is over 80!

NEW OUTFITS

There's a total of five different outfits for every character in *Soul Edge*; two colors for the one player outfit and two for the two player. Additionally, there's a fifth color and all new outfit for all your favorite characters; chosen by Japanese fans of the game. This brings up a number of points; that Namco care a great deal about their products and that there's some pretty scary Japanese outfit designers out there (Voldo in a pink coat? Er...).



















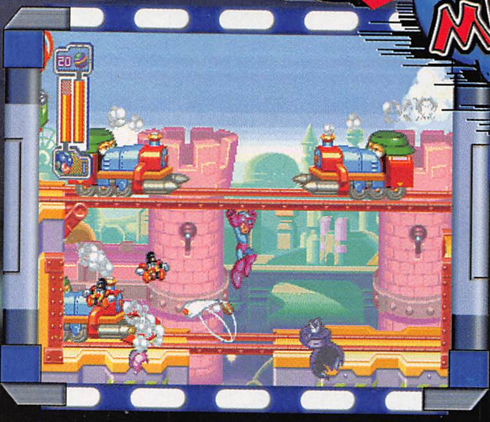



>FINALLY, A TRUE 32-BIT MEGAMAN!!



I've said this many times, but my favorite game company in the world is Capcom. Much of this love may come from, quite literally, my first experience with video games: Playing *Trojan* and the original *MegaMan* back-to-back at my friend's house in... it must have been... 1987. Looking back, I've found that I took such creative gameplay for granted. Here was an action game in which you could actually use your fallen foes' weapons! No longer were you restricted to using the same techniques level after level, and there was distinct strategy in the order you took out each robot, and which armament you used. Although nobody can deny that the utter sameness of "Defeat robot – find out which weapon works best – defeat robot – etc." got unbelievably tedious after five 8-bit sequels, (and 7 did little to help – there just wasn't enough new) with a few modern upgrades, *MegaMan* completely stands the test of time.

People looking for a 100% next-generation experience from the new *MegaMan* will be disappointed. There is no line-scrolling, there are no polygons, and there aren't any especially impressive effects to speak of. What *8* does have is achingly smooth trademark Capcom animation and extremely solid, satisfying, no-loose-ends gameplay... not to mention at least half an hour of TV-quality animation, interspersed throughout the game. Added to the usual discover-what-weapon-works-best *MegaMan* fare are literally TONS of new platforming ideas – each stage has one cool new feature, like riding on a sled, shooting scenes, piloting a floaty bubble-craft, swinging Simon Belmont style, and even mini-puzzles, which are never repeated until you reach Dr. Wily's fortress. Going beyond that are the many new forms of trusty Rush,











such as the Rush-Bike and Rush-Bomb, and numerous new weapons that do more than just inflict damage... they actually perform tasks like lifting you up, giving you an extra boost while jumping, lighting dark hallways and latching onto posts in classic *Bionic Commando* fashion. Even the standard *MegaMan* boss engine's been improved: Whereas before you never knew if you were attacking a boss with the "right" weapon, you now get a special sample and animation sequence if you make the correct choice. I still haven't even mentioned the all-new shop system, which you can read about below.

The graphics glisten in certain areas, and fall a bit short in others. At the top of the list is the utterly gorgeous animation of *everything* – the enemies, the bosses, the backgrounds, and *MegaMan* himself. Nothing is framey in this game. If you've played any recent arcade Capcom fighter you know exactly what I'm talking about. It's not only smooth, but there's so much of it on screen as to be numbing. At any one time, there can be thirty or forty li'l Mets (the little helmeted dudes that've been in *MegaMan* since day one) on screen, and when each one is shot, it erupts into a shower of tiny shrapnel, gears, and wires – each a sprite in and of itself. The area of *MM8*'s graphics that needs improvement is

THE BLUE BOMBER IS BACK!!

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



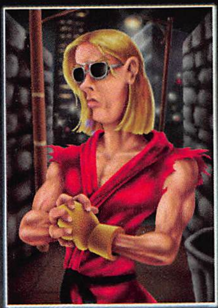






parallax... There is rarely more than three layers at once, but hey... even that should be impressive on the PlayStation. To my horror, however, *MM8* features a small amount of rendered background elements and enemies, with touch-ups to make them seem hand-drawn. There's not much to be said about the sound, as it's standard *MegaMan* music upgraded to CD status – happy, bouncy, non-intrusive. The most exciting aural feature of *8* is the awesome amount of voice from *MegaMan* and the bosses, although it's yet to be seen whether this feature will be carried over to the American version of the game.

As I said in last month's Lomax review, if you're an old-school gamer you'll probably really enjoy *MegaMan 8* for its rock-solid nostalgic feel and challenging gameplay. Those expecting a massive overhaul for our friend the Blue Bomber, however, need not apply. Oh, by the way, 1996 represents MegaMan's 10th birthday... Many thanks go to Capcom for a decade of fun, and here's to the next ten years! ***NR***

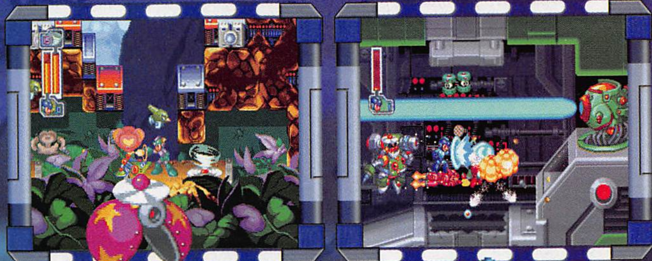


NICK ROX
Capcom = 2-D gods

>A MEGAMAN FIRST: DR. LIGHT'S ITEM SHOP

A *MegaMan* with tons of new gameplay features?? Mania! *MM8* is the first game since *MM3* that has tons of substantial gameplay upgrades, and Dr. Light's Lab, where you can buy items, is one of them. You exchange bolts, which can be found hidden in each level, for power-ups like new weapons, faster speed, the ability to exchange life and weapon recharges, stage exit functions, etc.

















Maybe it should've been called *Twisted Mettle.*

RE-LOADED

THE HARD-CORE SEQUEL







THE FREAKS ARE BACK!



KISS ME, YOU FOOL!

Interplay has done it again: taken the meanest, crudest, dirtiest crew of killing machines and given you the controls. *Re-Loaded "The Hard-core Sequel"* takes off where *Loaded* left off, with a better 3D engine, more complex level design, bigger/badder/better weapons, and some truly hideous new characters.

Sister Magpie, a roving Cyber Nun, was originally sent into the galaxy to collect funds for a new roof. However, since a couple of undesirables put a bullet through her armored head a few millennia ago, she's been on permanent malfunction.

The Consumer can shear through bone with her razor-sharp choppers and, I'm told, often does. Her shots cook the meat they explode, yum-yum. And Butch, well, we won't even talk about Butch. Senator what's-his-name would be camping on the GF stoop. So you see, as I said, the new characters are truly hideous.

The levels themselves (of which there are now 12) are where *Re-Loaded* really reloads. No longer must you simply find the key to open the door. This time out you are given specific mission objectives









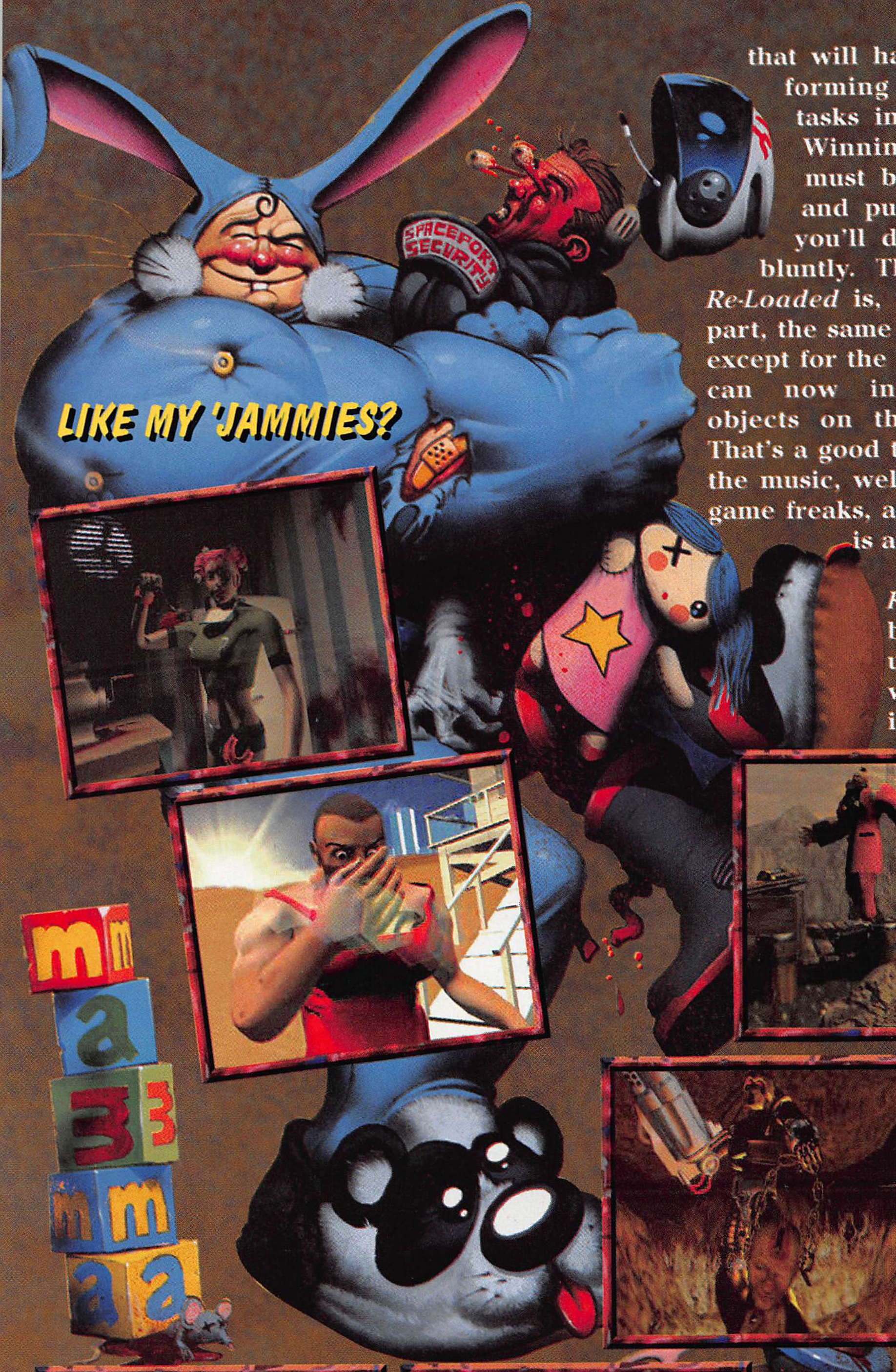
R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - GREMLIN	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



E. STORM
INTERPLAY HAS DONE IT AGAIN!



that will have you performing different tasks in each level. Winning strategy must be developed and put in play or you'll die, to put it bluntly. The control in *Re-Loaded* is, for the most part, the same as *Loaded*'s, except for the fact that you can now interact with objects on the playfield. That's a good thing. As for the music, well, turn it up, game freaks, a techno feast is at hand.





In retrospect, *Re-Loaded* is bigger (I figure nearly double in size), has all new weapons and special attacks, better graphics, a better 3D engine, burning hot new characters, great music, and tasty CG intros for one and all. I guess that spells "successful sequel." Indeed. ***E***





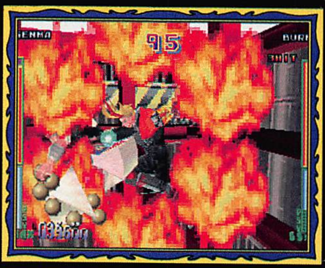






PSYCHIC FORCE

You've gotta stop and ask yourself just how many classic 32-bit titles would have stayed in Japan if it weren't for Acclaim. Think about it; *Layer Section*, *Bust-A-Move 2*, *Bubble Bobble Collection*, and *Darius Gaiden* are all games that would have never made it here if Acclaim hadn't picked 'em up. Their latest Japanese acquisition, *Psychic Force* (another Taito original), will be coming your way shortly. For all you fans wondering about the translation, I have some cool news to report...





First-off, the anime intro will make it into the american version completely unchanged. Yup, Acclaim's core anime people decided to leave the entire intro, complete with Japanese lyrics and music, fully intact. Tell me that's not *amazing*. In fact, apart from the obvious English translations made to the story mode, all the characters, colors, and backgrounds will stay





PSYCHIC BLAST!

During the intros, you'll be treated to an impressive multi-angle demo of action-packed fights. Taito took this opportunity to fill the screen with many examples of cool psychic blasts available to your fighters, and trust me, it more than piques one's curiousity.











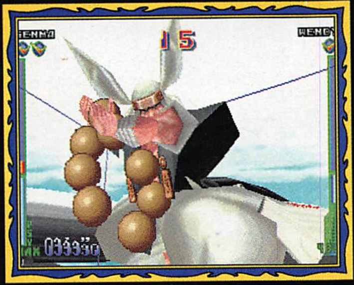




Combine the power of hot FMV with great animation and a cool story, and you get a kick-ass intro. Cast your fears aside, for Acclaim has managed the impossible: They kept the Japanese music – even the lyrics – completely intact and unedited. Yes, there's hope for the future!

COOL ANIMATION!





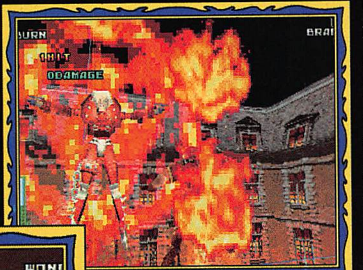




the same. The only other significant changes made, kudos once again to Acclaim, involve the computer AI. That's right, before the game hits these shores, the programmers will have taken the additional time to tweak the AI, as per Acclaim's specifics. I'll explain the importance of these AI enhancements later. For now, it's on to gameplay...



Psychic Force casts two psychic fighters (among 9) into a cool polygonal 3D battlefield arena. Fights take place inside a cube-shaped force field (check out the shots to get an idea of the size), and the characters are free to float anywhere within. The battles are totally unique: Each fighter has his or her own cool psychic power, ranging anywhere from powerful holy beams to perplexing teleports. Using high or low power attacks, and a combination of simple pad rotations, you can shower your opponents with dramatic psychic blasts (a psychic power bar indicates the strength of the attack). There are also hand-to-hand attacks, combos, and defensive shielding. Getting back to the american version's AI, a few *PF* fans around the office commented that the computer plays more like a human now, i.e., it moves much more unpredictably, responds to ranged attacks, and blocks more frequently (a definite improvement over the import version).







Never before has fighting been this original. The graphics, more precisely the 3D backgrounds, are colorful, smooth, and well designed. So too are the polygonal fighters, with cool textures, multiple colors, and great animation and expressions (and only a touch of poly break-up). The sound effects and voices are also excellent, and the music, well, it's by Zuntata (the musical geniuses behind many a Taito classic). As for their *Psychic Force* soundtrack... I want everyone in the world to hear this music and witness the power of Zuntata!



Guys, this is truly a rare event. A very good piece of Japanese-developed software is being ported to America, without tampering (in all the cool areas, anyway), and improved gameplay. I'm shocked! Nice job Acclaim, gamers appreciate the details, and you pulled through. *Psychic Force* is a great game, so keep an eye out for it. ***G***





LONG RANGE POWER!!!

The most integral part of any *Psychic Force* battle involves constant movement. If you're shooting a weak projectile, you have time to dodge the return fire. Power blasts take longer, however, so immediately block or tap the dodge button.





IN YOUR FACE COMBO MADNESS!!!

Never underestimate the effectiveness of close-range combat. Once an opening appears, slap your foe with a flurry of punches for mega damage. But get ready to throw up a shield, or quickly hold block, because you're instantly wide open

R REVIEW | PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - TAITO
- PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - 1ST QTR. '97



GLITCH
A RARE INSTANCE OF A GOOD JAPANESE PORT-OVER







THE DIVIDE: ENEMIES WITHIN





INCREDIBLE FMV STORYLINE!
The Divide includes some of the cleanest, coolest CG FMV sequences ever seen, easily immersing you into the storyline.

The Divide: Enemies Within is one of those low profile releases that I find myself reviewing more and more. Along with *Grid Runner*, *Pitball*, and *Blast Chamber*, there are games out there that sometimes struggle for notoriety among the *Tekkens* and *Wipeouts* of the PS world. And just like the aforementioned titles, *The Divide* is more than worthy of your time and effort.

As you can see by looking at these two glorious pages, Radical's *The Divide: Enemies Within* is driven by a powerful plot and great CG FMV. I'm not sure who the narrator is, but he has a captivating, entrancing voice, making the storyline completely believable. He tells the sad tale of the Divide, a land occupied by a race of peaceful, primitive creatures. One day this serenity is smashed forever, as aliens probe the world mercilessly, cursing the creatures below with strange technology. As others arrive to explore the planet's surface, the once innocent creatures ambush the newcomers with blind, furious rage. The beasts disappears into the planet's hidden reaches, taking one of the mechanized explorers along. With a failing heating system, the remaining explorer freezes over in minutes, trapped in an icy prison. Years later, unaware of the time lost, the explorer defrosts and sets off to find his captured partner. Cool, huh? Of course, this is where you step in.

The game begins with a short training session, where you'll be test driving your mech-suit. Here you'll be treated to the full compliment of weapons available in the game, as well















R REVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - RADICAL	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - VIACOM	DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



GLITCH
SHE AIN'T TOO PRETTY, BUT GAMEPLAY RULES THE DAY!



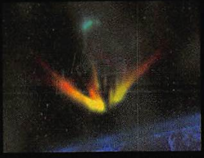
as all the walking and jumping upgrades (this level, by the way, takes place before the explorers go to the Divide – hence the free-for-all). The mech has standard issue laser cannons on both arms, which can (and must) be raised and lowered using the shoulder buttons to blast land and air based enemies. You have jump and double jump (just press the button twice), and various armor and gun upgrades (including the powerful gatling gun). When you first enter the Divide, your mech's damaged, you can't jump, and the





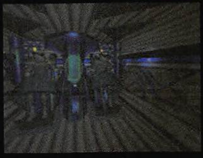


















laser cannon is your only weapon. But that's why you play games, right? Time for a little exploration!

Fifty+ locations, spread across broken landscapes and dark catacombs, can be visited and re-visited at will. In fact, you'll be doing a lot of backtracking as items are found in order to access new areas and/or complete current ones. For example, your first "quest" involves locating the Jumper. Once it's yours, almost half a dozen new areas, each with their own set of platforming challenges, are open for play. In effect, progress is not only predicated by certain items, it will often immediately exploit the most recently acquired power-ups. Finally, cool boss encounters break up the action, and the story *will* develop as you progress deeper into the world.









The 3D worlds are constructed entirely of textured polygons, running at 15 to 30fps. The low frame rate usually hits when you use the higher of the two camera angles, due to the mass of enemies and objects being displayed at once (and unfortunately this is also the most useful angle). Honestly, the 3D engine needs some work, but the game content itself more than compensates. The music consists of a droning ambient score and the sound is limited to gunfire, explosions, and incidental enemy and environmental effects.

Well, like I just said, the graphics ain't so hot (by today's PS standards, anyway) but the game is really very good. Once you dedicate a couple of hours (among many, many more) to *The Divide*, you'll see that it actually has much to offer in terms of gameplay and depth. G









LEAGUE OF PAIN

For some reason, I find myself consumed by this deep-rooted fascination for arenas. Personally, if a game has a little hidden stadium (i.e., *Guardian Heroes*), I'll probably spend more time there than in the rest of the game. Why? Well, I guess it's 'cause I love the idea of being stuck in one place with a bunch of other power-hungry psychos lookin' to kill. Enter *League of Pain*, a multiplayer futuristic sport set in a deep, dark, pit arena.

Pitball's the last violent cyber-sport title I played, and despite the opinions you might have read elsewhere, it is a very good game that I urge you to check out. While *League of Pain* doesn't incorporate the spectacular super-moves found in *Pitball*, it features very similar gameplay characteristics. Two teams of four players battle in a giant polygonal arena in an attempt to score on an elevated goal. Strangely, both teams share the same goal, and scoring is determined by the color (or "charge") of the ball. In order to charge the ball, you must venture into your opponent's end of the arena, fight off the inevitable defensive flurry, and make contact with the charging area. If done correctly, the ball will change color (to signify your possession) and you may take a shot at scoring. If you (oops!) score with a neutral ball, you'll actually give those points to your enemy.

As you can see, *League of Pain* tries to be as unique a game as possible, considering the narrow scope of this genre. When we get around to the review, I'll tell you all about some of the various offensive and defensive strategies at your disposal. I know for certain, however, that *League of Pain* has the hottest graphics ever seen in a game of this type. The polygonal players and stadium are rampant with mad light-sourcing and cool lens flares, and the animation and frame rate are truly top notch.















CHARGE UP YOUR BALLS!
BUST THROUGH THE ENEMIES' DEFENSE, USE THEIR CHARGING PAD, AND YOU'RE READY TO SCORE!



COOL REPLAYS!!!
REWIND OR FAST FORWARD AND WITNESS THE VCR-LIKE SCREEN WARPING... AIN'T IT NEAT?!



Be sure to check back with me soon for more coverage of *League of Pain*. Even though big name Psygnosis is publishing *LOP*, I'm afraid it might be lost in this sea of PS software we're currently dealing with. And, as with *Pitball*, I'm here to make sure that doesn't happen. *G*









HERE'S FOUR OF THE NUMEROUS CAMERA ANGLES!!

P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - BEYOND REALITY
PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-4
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - 1ST QUARTER '97



GLITCH
THAT #$&*% BALL SHORTS OUT MY ARMS!!


SURVIVAL IS SIMPLE,
NEVER STOP RUNNING.
"While graphics powerhouses come and go, it's titles like Grid Runner that focus on gameplay that have the potential to deliver long-term play to fans."
- Next Generation
"It's unique, challenging, and packed with addictive gameplay..."
-GAMEFAN
PLAYER 2 NEEDS 7 MORE FLAGS!
OPPONENT SLOWED
ALSO AVAILABLE FOR WINDOWS®95
GRID RUNNER™
Over 57 rounds of gameplay
15 monster opponents
Two-player head-to-head action
28 independent two-player rounds
Ability to perform different magical spells
©1996 VIRGIN INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT, INC. and RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT, LTD. All rights reserved. Grid Runner is a trademark of Virgin Interactive Entertainment, Inc. and Radical Entertainment Ltd. Virgin is a registered trademark of Virgin Enterprises, Ltd. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.
www.vie.com
Virgin INTERACTIVE entertainment
Radical ENTERTAINMENT
SEGA SATURN
PlayStation
KIDS TO ADULTS
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB





Billions of years ago (my, that's a long time), an alien soldier was transporting his civilization's life-giving ore when the creation of the solar system caused his ship to crash, scattering the ore throughout the newly-formed earth. Over time, ten humans came in contact with the ore... and they all work at GameFan! No, they were transformed into this game for you to play... *War Gods*!!

This 3D arcade original disappeared rather quickly and now has re-emerged on the Sony PlayStation for all









War Gods



earthlings to enjoy. In Midway's defense, I can't imagine why it came and went so fast. The game has a juicy 3D engine, hot fatalities and quality animation. Maybe the whole god thing *("You are chosen!")* was just to much for the neighborhood. *WG*'s moves are the tap-tap type, and yes, it's a block button game, but the controls are surprisingly smooth and the combo system easily absorbed. The action takes place in real 3D (3D buttons allows rotational gameplay) and the texture mapping which features "digital skin technology" (hey don't look at me), is actually really good. *War Gods* definitely demands further investigation (plus I grabbed enough shots for like 3 layouts), so we'll be back with a review in the next issue. If the game comes out before then and you're A) an *MK* fan, or B) like 3D fighters heavy on carnage, you have my permission to just buy it. *E*









P PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EUROCOM	# OF PLAYERS -1-2
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



E. STORM
ARE YOU A GOD?
"NO."
THEN DIEEE!



Just cause he's a joker doesn't mean he plays with a full deck.
Ante up to Crystal Dynamics' fastest, endorphin-based 3D action game. Your team of fellow speed-mongers includes Nikki, Fargus and Sid – an acrobatic wizard, a slightly twisted jester and his maniacal puppet-on-a-stick. Blur through unbelievably spacious levels of their deranged 3D kingdom while shape-changing into a fire-blasting dragon or raging rhino. Just sit down and get taken for a ride, it's pure rocket fuel.
Pandemonium!™
OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY
KIDS TO ADULTS K-A AGES 6+
Check out our new website at http://www.crystald.com
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS™
PlayStation™
Soon Available on PC CD-Rom
This official seal is your assurance that this product meets the highest quality standards of Sega™. Buy games and accessories with this seal to be sure that they are compatible with the Sega Saturn™ System. Sega and the Sega Saturn are trademarks of SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD. PlayStation is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Crystal Dynamics, the Crystal Dynamics logo, Pandemonium! the Pandemonium! logo and the related characters are trademarks of Crystal Dynamics. ©1996 Crystal Dynamics. All rights reserved. Call 1-800-771-3772 for Game Rating Information.

VMX RACING



GRAB YER SKID LIDS... WE'RE GOIN' RACING!

When I was a teen growing up in the 80's, motocross parks were abundant. Saddleback, Indian Dune and Roughrider were all within driving distance. As an up-and-coming racer, I spent nearly every weekend for some ten years either racing or practicing. Nowadays, cycle parks have fallen victim to sky high insurance rates and are almost completely extinct. It's a shame, really. I can't imagine what my youth would have been like without a Suzuki between my legs.

Since the only flyin' I do these days is on the way to the office, I'm very happy about Playmates' *VMX Racing*. Finally, the action is being packaged *successfully* for home use. I've wondered since I got into gaming, why motocross was not better represented. Few games exist, and until now what *was* available pretty much sucked (save *Super Motocross* on the 32X which came close). The folks over at Studio E, who are developing *VMXR* for Playmates, are obviously taking the task given them very seriously, as they are creating the single best Motocross game to date. When this puppy's done, watch out. Besides the fact that the riders don't put their foot out around tight corners they've managed to stick the mechanics perfectly thus far. The characters look and feel like the real thing. Bravo. Six tracks are available for your mud-whompin' pleasure, ranging from long enduros to ultra tight stadiums and you can enter a single race, practice, or sign up for the entire season. Choose your team (no official licenses here, but who cares?), 125 or 250cc, and get ready for lightning fast, ultra-populated racing that's as real as it gets. It's so real in fact that you're often hard pressed just to find your rider in the crowd as the racers

EXCLUSIVE U UPDATE

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - STUDIO E

PUBLISHER - PLAYMATES

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS -1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - MARCH



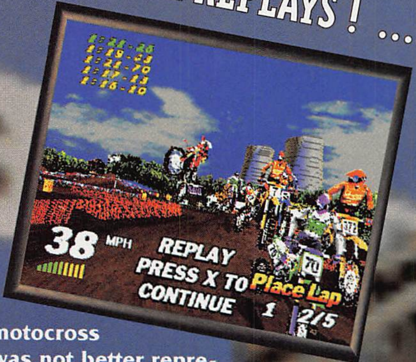
E. STORM
DOWN 'N DIRTY MX ACTION... PICK IT UP!







DIG THOSE REPLAYS ! ....

























WHEN THE ACTION'S PAUSED THE CAMERA ROTATES AROUND THE FRAME. ZOOM IN FOR A CLOSER LOOK! YOU'RE IN CONTROL!



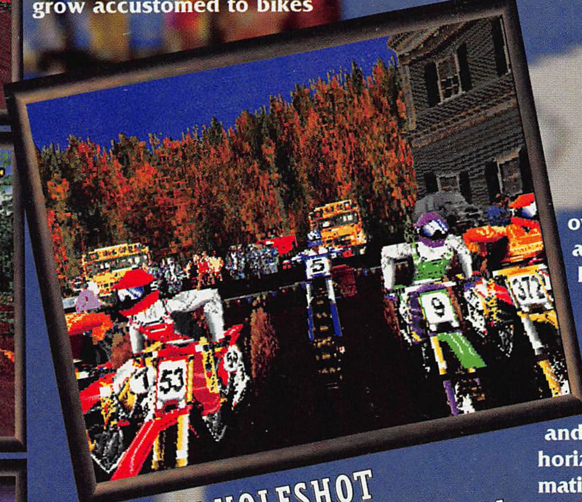


bunch up before the pack thins out, just like the real thing. You can set the camera way back or close up, to suit your riding style. The frame rate suffers just a touch when you're mired in the pack but the game moves so fast to begin with you'll pay it no mind. The game's not done yet either, so this could change. E's 3D engine is not only fluid but plants more polygons in your face than you've perhaps ever seen. Each track is privy to complete landscapes. From the cheering crowds at Anaheim Stadium to lush forests, it's all there, all the time. The music in VMXR comes forth courtesy of Tommy Tallarico Studios and the sound effects were sampled from actual bikes, so in the audio dept. *VMXR* screams like a banshee. As for the gameplay, well, once you grow accustomed to bikes over cars and the sensitivity therein, you'll be adrenaline rushing from the starting gate to the finish line. *VMXR* is a gas to play. As has become the standard of late in racing fare, after each moto you can watch as the entire race plays back just as you played it.

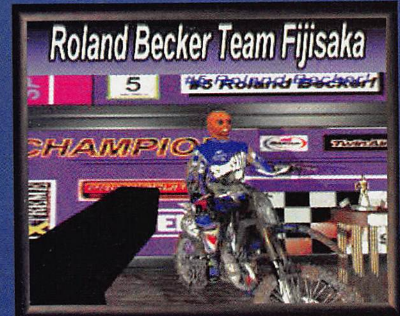
Additionally, *VMXR* supports two players and allows you to split the screen vertically or horizontally. Currently, the frame rate drops dramatically, so I hope they can iron out the kinks.

Visually, *VMXR* suffers from little to no clipping and everything looks mighty impressive for a polygonal game. As Studio E enters the final stages of development (the game's set for a March release), Playmates seems headed directly for the winner's circle. *E*









GRAB THE HOLESHOT OR FACE A 1ST TURN TRAFFIC JAM YOU DON'T WANNA BE A PART OF!











SWAGMAN

Another fine Core game is making its final approach. Yes, *Swagman*, the game that even Nightmarens are scared of, is almost done. We'll have a big blowout on *Swagman* in the next issue.

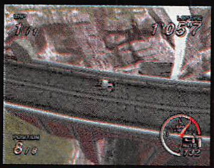


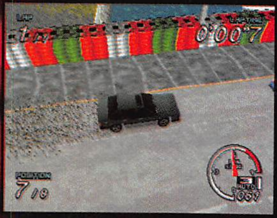




RUSH HOUR

Psygnosis' *Rush Hour*, an overhead polygon-de-force, allows the player to scale way in and way, way out. Though early, this racer looks extremely promising. We'll have more as it becomes available.



RALLY CROSS

New in development from Sony, it's *Rally Cross*, the first off-road racer to give *Sega Rally* a run for its money. *Rally Cross* looks extremely promising. The environments rock and the cars feel like the real thing.

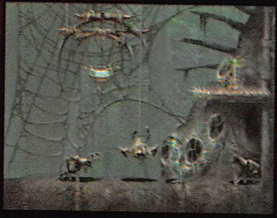


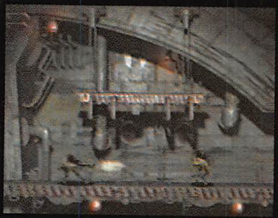




ABE'S ADVENTURE

Sad, to display hideous video grabs of this wonderful new title. We'll make up for it as soon as we get a disc. Abe's the coolest and Gamespeak, a truly unique feature. We'll do a feature on Abe's Adventure very soon.




CRYPT KILLER

Aim yer gun and shoot till the screen bleeds. Demons are around every corner in Konami's cryptic arcade port, Crypt Killer. If you like shootin' look for a review next month.

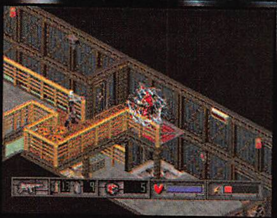







NO REMORSE

Crusader: No Remorse, the latest from Origin, is a carnage-filled actioner in the vein of *Overkill*. While the graphics aren't nearly as sophisticated, the gameplay seems on track.








COMMAND & CONQUER



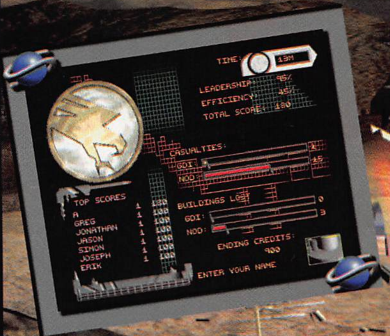


It's not often that GameFan covers both the Saturn and PlayStation versions of a game in a single review. Normally they're different enough to warrant individual evaluation (i.e.. the Saturn version isn't as good) but in *Command and Conquer*'s case the two versions are so similar there's little point in splitting them up. Plus this way I get to wrangle an extra page of coverage for a game that I feel should be at the top of every strategy fan's shopping list.

If you're a PC owner, you most likely already know about *Command and Conquer*, the pseudo-sequel to the hugely underrated PC action/strategy classic *Dune 2* (also available on Genesis - but it's hard to find). *C&C* is the third most successful PC title *EVER*, and a strong contender for the greatest action/strategy game of all time. And now, just as *its* sequel hits the PC, console owners are finally getting the chance to see what all the fuss is about...

(continued)

AT LAST!!! ONE OF THE BEST-SELLING PC TITLES EVER HITS THE HOME CONSOLES!





REVIEW

PlayStation / SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - WESTWOOD	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - VIRGIN	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - 1ST QTR '97



KNIGHTMARE
THE ULTIMATE ACTION/STRATEGY GAME

COMMAND & CONQUER







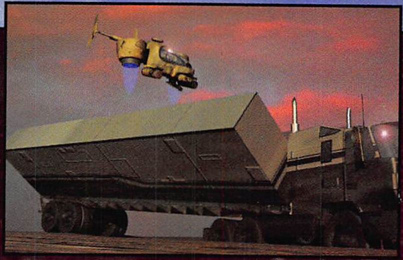




Command & Conquer is a real-time war sim that puts you in control of one of two different military powers, locked in a deadly struggle for global supremacy. Every time you start a new campaign you must choose between either the G.D.I. (the good guys) or the Brotherhood of NOD (the bad guys), and your choice will determine both the missions you undertake and the forces at your disposal (each power has certain units exclusive to their ranks). Each force comes on its own CD (*C&C* is a dual CD pack) and has its own story, featuring some of the most impressive FMV you're ever likely to see. And I don't throw comments like that around casually. The NOD ending is simply mind blowing!





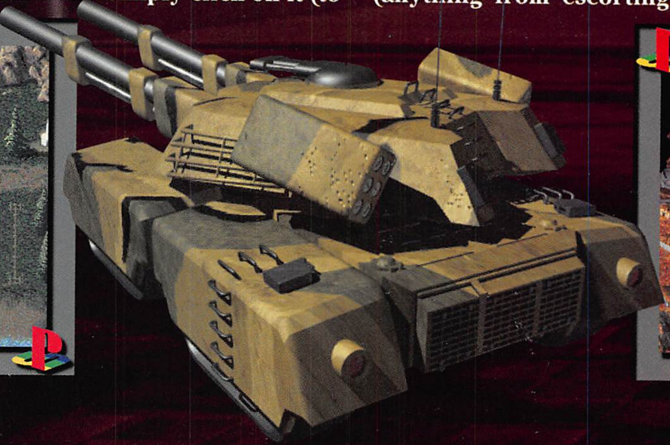


Unlike some strategy games, *C&C* is relatively straight forward to get to grips with. The search-and-destroy gameplay is instantly accessible, while control is achieved through a simple, cursor-driven, point-and-click interface that becomes second nature after only a few minutes of play. Believe it or not, the D-pad makes for a surprisingly good mouse substitute , and all of the PC's keyboard shortcuts (guard unit, force move, force fire) can be accessed through a combination of button presses. To control a unit simply click on it (to select it), point the cursor where you want it to go and click again. If you click on an enemy, your unit will attack that enemy. It's as simple as that. The side bar interface and group selection is a little more complicated, but not very. Every command you need to build and control your entire army can accessed in a matter of seconds.

While *C&C*'s gameplay and control interface are refreshing simple on the surface, the driving mechanics are infinitely more complex. There are hundreds of different ways to approach each new mission, and no two battles are alike. It's not simply a case of the biggest army wins. A few well placed soldiers dug in at a bridge can stop a far more powerful force from advancing, simply because they have the geographic advantage. In *C&C*, tactics are everything. Although you'll need quick reflexes to command your units in a combat situation, you'll need an even quicker brain to juggle all the various factors going on at any one time during a mission. Trying to manage three battles and a base simultaneously is enough to induce panic in even the most level-headed gamer.

Although the mission objectives vary from stage to stage (anything from escorting a convoy to capturing a nuclear









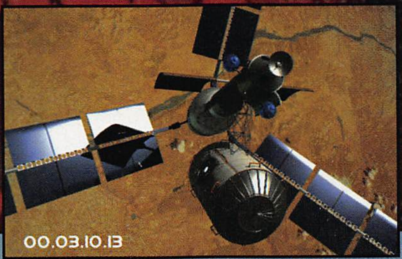






warhead) the most common objective involves the complete annihilation of all enemy units in the area (or a variation thereof). Thus a standard mission has three stages: preparation, recon and combat.

In the preparation stage you build up your base, harvest tiberium (an ore that gets you money), and build a force capable of defending your base against enemy attacks. In the recon stage you send out search parties of troops and vehicles to explore the terrain and secure key locations (like bridges and passes) that isolate territory for your side. Finally, once you have established where the enemy base is, and built up a powerful army, you attack. The battles in *C&C* are large, frequent, bloody, and intensely involving.







As I mentioned before, both the PS and Saturn versions of *C&C* are very similar. In fact, in terms of basic gameplay and in-game graphics, they're virtually identical. They're also pretty faithful to the PC original, with spot-on CPU AI, identical sound effects and redbook audio ('I am a mechanical man!'). The only noticeable difference is the graphics – the PC version runs at a higher resolution with slightly more frames of animation – but this doesn't detract from the gameplay in any way.

The Saturn version loads levels slightly quicker than the PS version (not a big deal when a level lasts an hour) and has variable speed settings (a blessing for long battles, believe me). The PS version has much better FMV and, best of all, a campaign of PS exclusive missions.

Unfortunately, neither version has the PC's awesome link-up mode. Although the CPU AI is good, *C&C* is a game best played against a human opponent, and it's lamentable that console gamers should be denied this pleasure. Virgin claims that they wanted to make the Sega version Net-Link compatible but that Sega didn't provide them with the technology in time. Whatever the case, I smell a missed opportunity.

Despite that one BIG downer, *Command & Conquer* is still one of the best action/strategy games you can buy for a home console. In balance, the PS version is the better of two (slightly), but the differences don't really matter. Whether you own a PS or Saturn, if you have any kind of interest in strategy games at all, or even think you might, then *Command & Conquer* is an essential purchase. It's done more to convert gamers to the joys of strategy than any other game in history, and, given a chance, it might do the same for you. ***K***



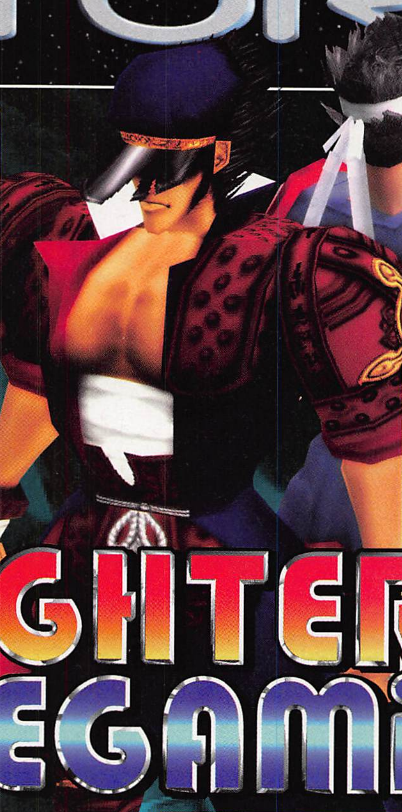








Fighters MegaMix















If you put your head to the ground and listen very carefully, you may just be able to hear the rumblings. Something's coming. Something big. Something so awesome, that it could well rupture the fabric of our very existence. Two of the greatest 3D fighting games ever created are about to collide in a 60fps, armor-breaking, guard-reversing polygon extravaganza that's set to make history.

After hands-on experience GameFan is happy to report that *Fighters MegaMix* is nothing short of astounding. I don't have the space to go into too much detail this month, so here's a run-down on what to expect.

Fighters MegaMix has 32 characters (that we know of), with at least 10 secret. All of the *Fighting Vipers* and *VF2* characters appear (including bosses), and this time they're equipped with new moves and techniques. Remarkably, the *VF* characters come with a lot of their *VF3* moves, meaning a vast chunk of Yu Suzuki's Model 3 masterpiece is instantly transferred to *MegaMix*. The *Vipers*, too, have had some extra techniques added, though nothing like the *VF* characters.

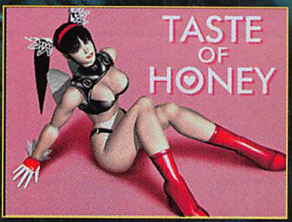
We can confirm that the ten secret playable characters include Janet Marshall from *Virtua Cop 2* (who plays like Aoi from *VF3*); Rent-a-Hero from, er, *Rent-a-Hero*; Bean and Bark from *Sonic The Fighters*; Akira and Sarah from *VF Kids*; Shiva (the missing character from *VF1*), Deku (a bean), Ura Bahn and the Daytona car! There are also some new alternative costumes for a few of the regular characters, including an astounding new kit for Honey.

The game has two markedly different modes of play: *VF* rules and *Fighting Vipers* rules. In *VF* mode the game plays like *VF*, with precision mechanics and realistic physics. The *Viper* characters also have no power counter techniques (although though the *VF*ers still have armor-breaking facilities). In *Fighting Vipers* mode all hell breaks loose, with floating combos and power counter moves for all characters.

There's so much more I want to talk about (the intro, the different one player paths, the survival and training mode), but I'll save that for the review. Needless to say, Saturn owners everywhere should start smiling now. The ultimate 3D fighting game is just around the corner...

MAJOR MEGAMIX COVERAGE IN THE NEXT GAMEFAN AND MEGAFAN!









PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

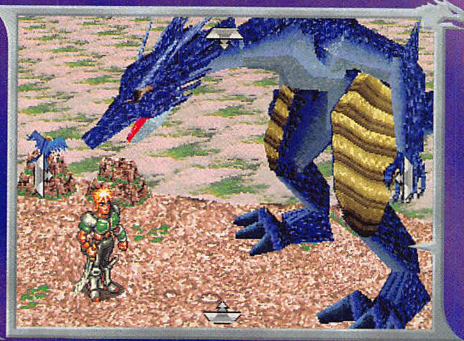
- DEVELOPER - AM2
- PUBLISHER - SEGA
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - MARCH



KNIGHTMARE
TASTE OF HONEY



Move over, Arnold.
SPOT's Got More Moves and Better Reviews.
"One of the finest 32-bit platformers on any system...innovative and addictive...beautiful graphics, Hilarious animation, Stirring music. This game is packed with secrets." –P.S.X.
SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
"...a heapin' helpin' of retro-flavored platform-game goodness, and that's a pleasant rarity in the 3-D obsessed PlayStation world...There seems to be addiction written all over this thing." –PSXtreme
"I think it's safe to say that this could easily be the best isometric action game ever." –Die Hard Gamefan
"Editor's top five picks. SPOT Goes to Hollywood contains tons of gameplay. The graphics are excellent along with fantastic sound effects." –EMG2
"SPOT has found a new home on the PlayStation... fun and imaginative levels... this game looks outstanding." –EGM
SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
SEGA SATURN
PlayStation
SEGA SATURN
KIDS TO ADULTS
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Virgin Interactive entertainment
Burst
To order, visit your local retailer or call 1-888-4VIRGIN

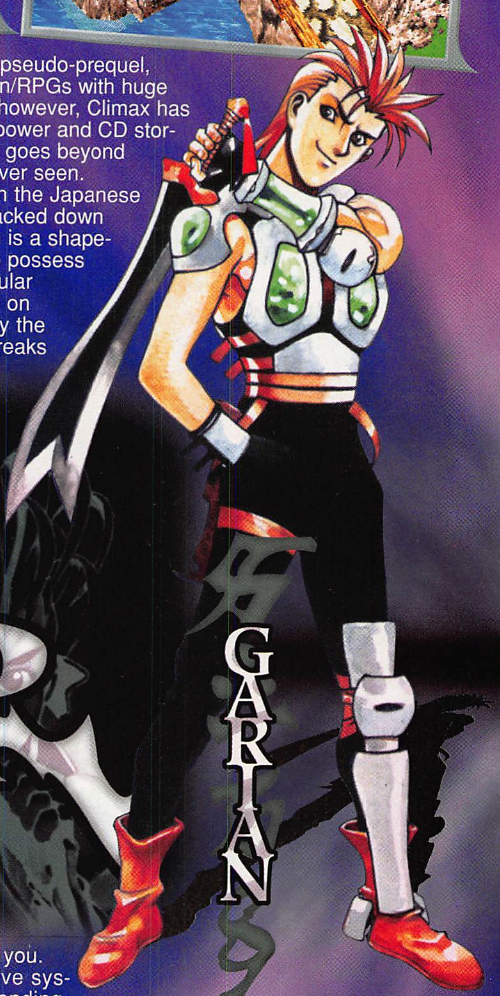




On the surface, *Dark Savior* looks very similar to its pseudo-prequel, Climax's *Landstalker*. They're both isometric action/RPGs with huge landscapes and a compelling story. This time, however, Climax has taken full advantage of the Saturn's 32-bit processing power and CD storage space to deliver a vast and unique adventure that goes beyond *Landstalker* to become unlike any action/RPG you've ever seen.

In *Dark Savior* you play the part of Garian (Ryu-Ya in the Japanese version), an elite Rajeen bounty hunter who has finally tracked down and caught his oldest adversary: the villainous Bilan. Bilan is a shape-shifting monster that lives only to kill, and has the power to possess his victims' bodies. Because Bilan cannot be killed by regular means, he has been sentenced to death by carbon freeze on Jailer's Island, a notorious maximum security prison run by the mysterious warden Kurtleigen. But on the way there, Bilan breaks free and goes on the rampage. What happens next is up to you.

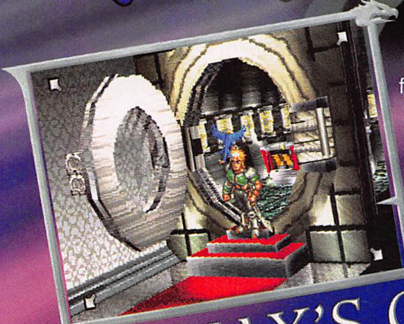






DARK SAVIOR

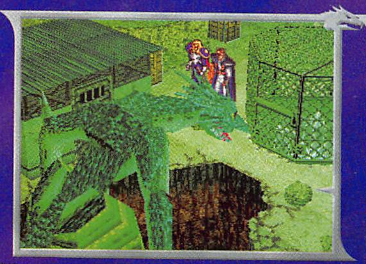
CLIMAX'S GROUNDBREAKING SATURN LANDSTALKER FOLLOWUP HITS THE U.S.!!



Dark Savior operates an innovative interactive narrative system that Climax have termed 'the Parallel System.' Depending on what you do in the opening ship sequence, the rest of the game will be based on one of five different 'parallel' adventures. Each parallel takes place in the same universe with the same characters and similar locations, but a different story. For instance, if you actually manage to find and defeat Bilan before he escapes the ship, your adventure on Jailer's Island will revolve around something completely different.



The Parallel System is a seriously cool idea, and adds huge replay value to the game. Each parallel has its own specific locations and events (e.g. parallels 3 & 4 have an awesome poly-






R REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - CLIMAX
- PUBLISHER - SEGA
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - HARD
- AVAILABLE - NOW



Really? Let me look that up...









gon mine cart sequence – the best ever!) and the way the storyline of each parallel ties in with all the others is quite ingenious.

Even though *Dark Savior* has one, or rather five, of the coolest stories ever to grace an RPG, the multiple plot lines are not the game's strongest feature. The game engine is. Like *Landstalker*, the world of *Dark Savior* is primarily viewed from a 3/4 isometric viewpoint. Climax has acknowledged the weaknesses of an isometric camera (lots of blind spots), and has found a solution in the aptly named Hyperion Perspective (see below). Creating the environment out of texture-mapped polygons not only gives the landscape a more solid, realistic feel, but it also allows for the game camera to be manipulated.

However, what really impresses is the way Garian interacts with the environment. Even though Garian is a flat sprite in a 3D word, he is incredibly responsive, and navigates the terrain as accurately and as fluently as an action/platform character. He can run, jump, turn in mid-air, grab ladders in mid-jump and attack at any time, just like an action character, but in a vast, detailed, 3D RPG world!

If there is one downside to the Hyperion Perspective, it's that the character sprites sometimes look a little flat against the polygon landscape, but only when you move the game camera around. Other than that the graphics are all first rate, and the blend of animated sprites and polygon backdrops is almost seamless. The soundtrack is also excellent, with numerous atmospheric tracks that perfectly compliment the game's many locations. *Dark Savior* looks and sounds just like you'd expect a 32-bit *Landstalker* to look and sound – amazing!

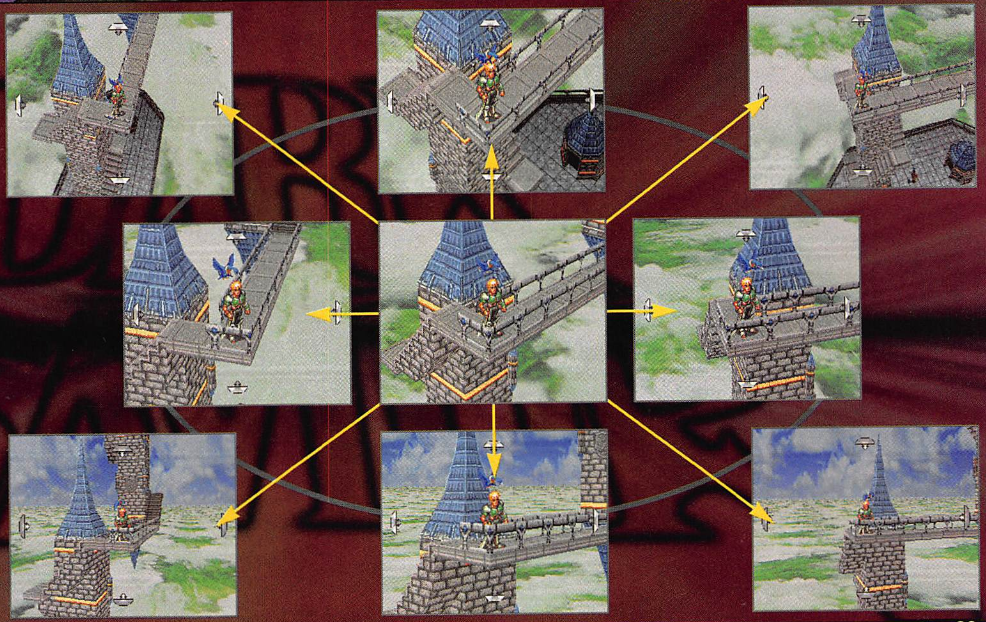
Before I wrap up I do have a couple of minor criticisms, and I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't point them out. First, although *Dark Savior* has some tough sections, most good action game players will have the game licked in a few days' play (non-stop mind you). Second, the 2D combat system, though fun, is not as polished as the rest of the game. And third, I thought it was a little sad the way SOA 'cleaned up' the island's currency. Cigarettes are now 'chocolate bars,' whisky bottles are now 'bottles' and porno mags have become 'scary magazines.' But, hey, I guess I should just be grateful that the game got a translation at all, and that Spencer Nilson didn't change the soundtrack.

Despite these criticisms, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend *Dark Savior* to any and all Saturn adventure fans. It's an epic experience, and like all great games, once you start playing you don't want to stop. There's a distinct lack of decent Saturn RPGs over here at the moment (*Shining Wisdom, Legend of Oasis, Blazing Heroes* and er... that's it), so *Dark Savior* should be greeted with open arms. One thing's for sure: *Landstalker* fans are going to flip!

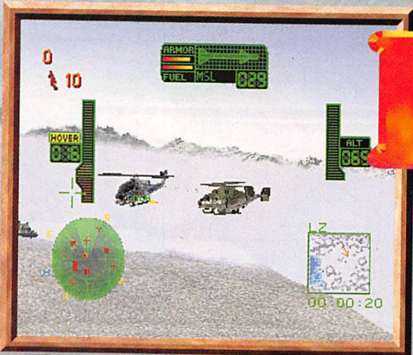
K

HYPERION PERSPECTIVE

Landstalker may have been locked in an isometric perspective, but *Dark Savior* isn't. While the main characters and objects are all traditional hand-drawn sprites, the environment is created out of texture-mapped polygons, allowing the player the freedom to manipulate the game camera at any time. Sometimes hidden objects are revealed, and sometimes it's handy just to check that Garian is in line for a jump. It's a solution to the age-old isometric problem of depth perception. Even better, if you play with the NiGHTS pad, the analog controller can be used to control the view, while the regular pad controls Garian! An analog camera? Excellent!



BLACK DAWN





So many PS to Saturn conversions, so little time. Unlike many previous efforts, however, *Black Dawn* has lost very little in the translation. Come to think of it, *Black Dawn*, in any form, is of high enough quality to be a success based on its fine gameplay alone.

Only a handful of chopper sims have seen the light of day on 32-bit systems, and of those few, only a couple ever merited a passing grade. *Black Dawn* is the best one I've seen thus far. Whether it be the fine control necessary to tightly maneuver intense battlefields, or perfectly balanced action and strategy, *Black Dawn*'s got it all. The Saturn version admirably attempts to replicate the cool gouraud shading and light-sourcing of the PS version, with very little lost in the synthetic re-creation. Similarly, the frame rate, although running a few notches slower than in its PS brethren, still pushes the game along at pleasant speeds. Finally, the sound, including a brilliant Tallarico soundtrack, is fantastic.

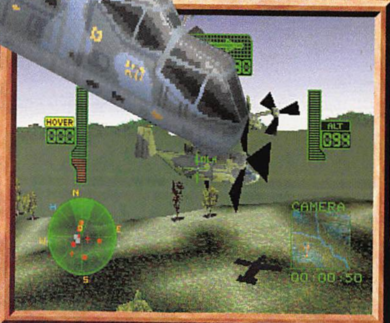




In terms of gameplay, *Black Dawn* offers-up many involving missions around the globe. For example, one mission has you rescuing hostages (*Choplifter* style) while all around you a battle is being waged between the local police force, the army, and scores of bad-guys. Another level involves the destruction of several key communications outposts. Yeah, that's a cliche mission in flight games, but *Black Dawn*'s flight controls (especially its strafing and ascending/descending) are so damn fine-tuned that any mission is a joy to play.

The bottom line: Saturn owners looking for the best chopper game to ever hit the system will be extremely satisfied with *Black Dawn*. It never amazes, but it will consistently supply you with solid gameplay. ***JS***









REVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - BLACK OPS	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - VIRGIN	DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



GLITCH
BLACK OPS DOES IT AGAIN...



KNiGHTMARE'S CELEBRATION OF *CHRISTMAS NiGHTS*!

I wasn't here when GameFan reviewed *NiGHTS* last year, so I didn't get a chance to voice my opinion. It seems that everyone was so caught up in the joy of *Mario 64* that they neglected to give *NiGHTS* the attention that it deserved. Unlike *Mario 64*, *NiGHTS* is not an immediate game and it takes a fair amount of time to get acquainted with the finer nuances of the mechanics. Don't get me wrong – *Mario 64* is definitely a revolutionary piece of software – but in my opinion, *NiGHTS* is equally as good, just in a different, more subtle way. And now that *Christmas NiGHTS* is here, I'm taking the opportunity to set the record straight.



1. KARAOKE

There are those at the GameFan office who don't seem to appreciate my rendition of 'Dreams Dreams'. Come to think of it, they didn't really appreciate the tune in the first place. Personally, I love it, but then heck, what do I know? I liked the original *Daytona USA* tunes!



The story behind *Christmas NiGHTS* goes something like this. Back in summer 1996 Sega rush released *NiGHTS* to get it out in time to do battle with *Mario 64*. Because of the rush, Sonic Team had a lot of ideas left over that they didn't get to implement (particularly the calendar-sensitive dates). So instead of waiting for the sequel, Yuji Naka approached Sega with the idea of producing a non-profit making seasonal *NiGHTS* disk – incorporating of all their left over ideas – as a gift to loyal Sega owners. Sega approved and the result is before you. I mean, does Sega love you or what?!





At its most basic level, *Christmas NiGHTS* can be seen as a one-dream-and-one-boss demo of *NiGHTS* (two if you count Elliot's brand new course through Spring Valley) with calendar-sensitive seasonal trimmings. But in truth, it goes much further than that. The new story, the new hand-drawn CG, the new courses, and especially all the presents constitute an entirely new *NiGHTS* experience. For a fan like me, it's almost too good to be true!









4. NIGHTOPIAN COLLECTION

Yes! Now this what we've been waiting for. The A-Life analyzer allows you to take a look at all of the Nightopians and Meepians (mutants!) on a level, and informs you of their collective and individual disposition. When they're all happy, they sing the *NiGHTS* theme!! If you have the full version of *NiGHTS* you can also see the A-Life for all six regular *NiGHTS* levels! Too cool!



2/3. LINK & TIME

In the LINK ATTACK, NiGHTS is given a free run around Frozen Bell course one, in an attempt to rack up as large a link in as few laps as possible. In the TIME ATTACK, NiGHTS is once again given free run, this time around Spring Valley course one, with the aim being to complete a lap and collect all 29 objects in as short a time as possible.





Go on, pick me! I'm CLARIS!!



The first thing to strike you when you boot up *Christmas NiGHTS* is the graphics. From the title screen to the boss stage, *Christmas NiGHTS* gives *NiGHTS* a complete aesthetic makeover. Spring Valley is covered in a blanket of snow, all the characters wear Christmas clothes, all of the level items (the ideya palace, the balloon claw, the Nightopians, etc.) have been transformed into festive representations of themselves, and snow falls constantly, lighting up the ground in tiny little flashes where it lands. *Christmas NiGHTS* positively drips with Yuletide atmosphere, and if anything this new look is even more vibrant and colorful than regular *NiGHTS* (sounds like a laundry detergent ad doesn't it?).

As I consider *Mario 64* to be a revolution in graphics, so I consider *NiGHTS* to be a revolution in sound. Christmas *NiGHTS* continues the tradition of aural excellence with a soundtrack so good it's worth getting even if you don't own a Saturn. The all new Winter tunes are as memorable as anything in regular *NiGHTS*,













REVIEW — SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SEGA	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - SEGA	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
DOES SEGA LOVE US OR WHAT?!












5. MELODY BOX
Provided you have the full version of *NiGHTS*, the Melody Box gives you what all *NiGHTS* fans have been waiting for: the ability to mix your own *NiGHTS* tunes! The soundtrack for each level is made up of multiple (six or seven) bars of music, and each bar has four different strains depending on how happy the Nightopians are. Sega included this just for me.

6. SONIC
Sonic: Into Dreams! Why the hell not! Rather than fly around Spring Valley, Sonic runs around with a super double jump to snag those hard to reach chips. The boss for this section is Puffy, who's been made up to look like Dr. Robotnik! What's more, the boss music is actually taken from the final boss in the import version of *Sonic CD*!








with a brilliant redbook remix of *Jingle Bells* for Christmas time, and an *a cappella* version of *Dreams Dreams* when you complete the game.

Elliot's new dream (basically a new level) is a feast for *NiGHTS* players hungry for new courses, with potential for two continuous links and a reverse clockwise path for Gillwing. The intro and outro (hand drawn for a warmer feel) are cool, even if the American version does have an incredibly irritating female voice over (you can almost hear her smile). Sonic Team has also removed some of *NiGHTS'* bugs and tweaked the gameplay a little to make it more enjoyable.

I wish had the space to talk about the fluid, intuitive gameplay, but if I want to fit all the presents in I'd better stop now. The bottom line is this: *Christmas NiGHTS* is an indispensable companion to *NiGHTS* and a super cool product in its own right. I'm stunned at the amount of effort that's been put into this. It represents an unprecedented display of generosity and respect from Sega to its fans, and let's face it, you don't see a free Christmas *Mario* or *Crash*, do you now?

K







Pick me please I'm ELLIOT!!





7/8/9. MUSEUM MOVIES &GOODS
The *NiGHTS* museum features over 50 pieces of awesome *NiGHTS* art, all lovingly rendered in hi-res, while the two movies are remixes of the *NiGHTS* CG. GOODS is a catalog of *NiGHTS* merchandise, including cuddly toys and the infamous *NiGHTS* cap: the cherished possession of all true NiGHTS fans! And no matter what anyone tells you, I don't put on the cap and pretend to fly around when no one's looking. It's just not true, all right?

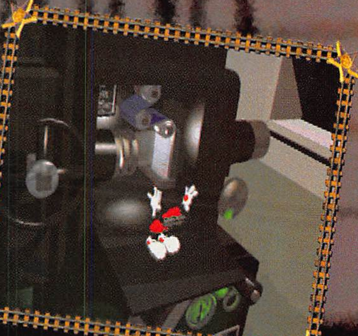




10. REALA
Just when you think you've found all the presents in *Christmas NiGHTS*, along comes Reala to prove otherwise. Just play the game on April 1st and a new option appears on your presents screen - REALA! Now you too can fly around Spring Valley as *NiGHTS'* arch enemy, executing hapless Nightopians without a shred of conscience. Mwa ha ha ha! 'There goes one now!'

Spot Goes to Hollywood





When GameFan reviewed the PlayStation version of *Spot Goes to Hollywood* last year, it got a bit of a kicking. I didn't play it then and so had nothing to go on but my fellow editors' opinions. So when the Saturn version finally came in (over two years late!) I expected the worst.



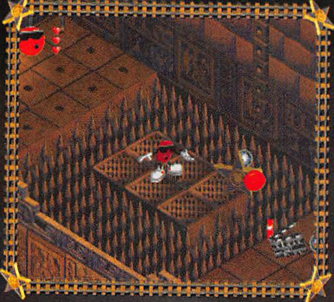
Spot kicks off with an awesome rendered intro (among the best I've ever seen) involving a bubble floating down over Hollywood into a movie theater, and Spot getting sucked into the big screen. It's a lot grainier than it was on PS, but the frame rate is high and it's full screen. In fact, all of the CG scenes in *SGTH* are first class. Maybe that's what took Virgin so long.

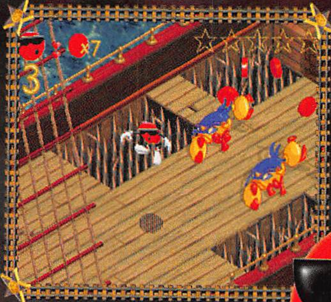
Once I got into the game itself I was pleasantly surprised. Spot is actually pretty good fun to play. The mixture of pre-rendered backdrops and traditional hand-drawn animated sprites works well, while Tommy Tallarico's John Williams-esque soundtrack perfectly captures the cinematic mood of the game. The levels are varied and challenging, and Spot himself is actually very responsive (E. Storm believes the control has been improved for the Saturn version).

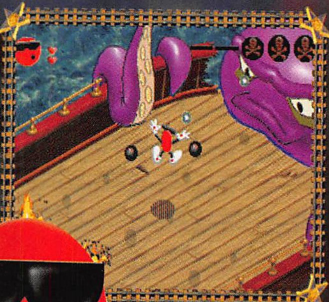


Unfortunately, the main problem that plagued the PS version of *SGTH* makes a return on the Saturn. Because of the isometric perspective, the depth perception is portrayed very badly, and sometimes the only way you can tell where things are is by their shadows (which not all objects have). An extra life that looks like it's on the ground at the top of the screen may actually be in the air in the middle. It's very frustrating to die just because you can't tell where the next platform is supposed to be.

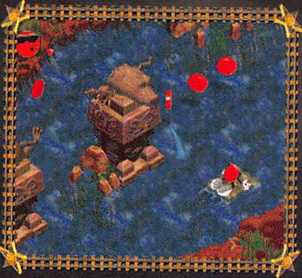
Other than that, I like Spot. The different movie settings are cool, and finding all the hidden levels and stars provides quite a challenge. The restart points are well positioned and you can return to any completed level at any time to hunt for stars. I still believe that isometric platform games are a bad idea in principle, but somehow *Spot* manages to rise above the shortcomings of its genre and become a decent little action/platform game. Not worth two years wait, but not bad either. ***K***







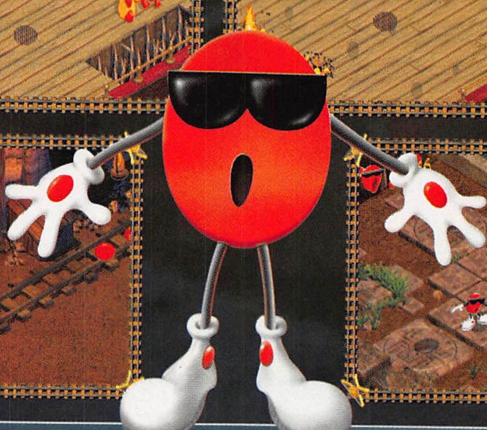










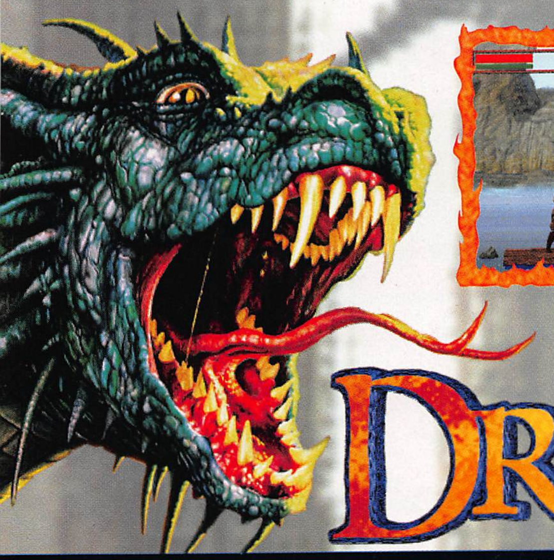


REVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - BURST (a div. of Virgin)	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - VIRGIN	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
IF ONLY THE VIEW WAS SPOT ON...









A GAME THAT ACTUALLY DOES THE MOVIE JUSTICE!

DRAGONHEART

FIRE & STEEL







Even though *DragonHeart* wasn't that good a movie, you've got to admit, it's still pretty good source material for a video game. A valiant knight teaming up with a fire-breathing dragon to fight a powerful tyrant and his evil army? There's a lot of potential there. So it comes as no surprise to learn that the license-meisters at Acclaim have snatched up the rights to the home versions and released both a PS and a Saturn version of *DragonHeart* to ride the Christmas wave (a little late to cash in on the movie, methinks).

DragonHeart is a 2D action/platform game in the same mold as *Skeleton Warriors.* You take control of a digitized Dennis Quaid (the latest actor to be immortalized in silicon) who must fight his way through multiple side scrolling levels that mirror the plot from the movie. Along the way you'll meet Draco, a fire-breathing dragon who joins you in your quest after you've beaten him in combat. Once Draco is your ally, you can ride him in 3D FMV sections, or use a horn to summon him during regular play, as kind of a "smart bomb" alternative.

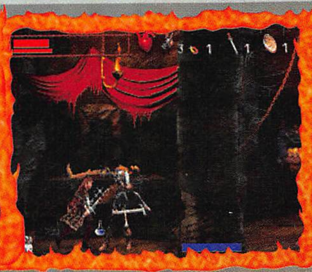




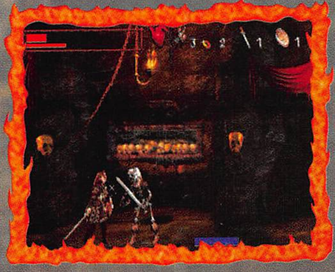
Your character is equipped with a sword and a number of attacks (including a rear stabbing attack like in the movie) and the combat system introduces a new 'strength' bar which actually tires your character while he fights. Attack too much and he pauses to take a breather! It's an incredibly lame idea, and adds frustration to an already fiddly control system. Whoever was responsible should be sat down and made to play *Ghouls 'N Ghosts* and *Castlevania* till they realize the error of their ways.

DragonHeart has some nice art and some good ideas, but the poor controls and ropy collision detection make the game almost unplayable. In an age where action/platform games have been refined to an art form, *DragonHeart* just fails to impress. ***K***









R REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - FUNCOM	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM	DIFFICULTY - DIFFICULT
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
EVEN THE MOVIE WAS BETTER...

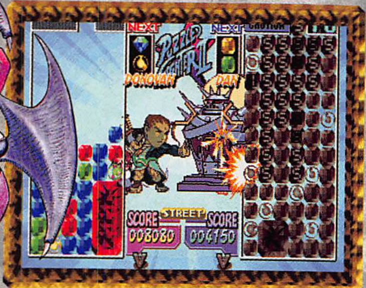


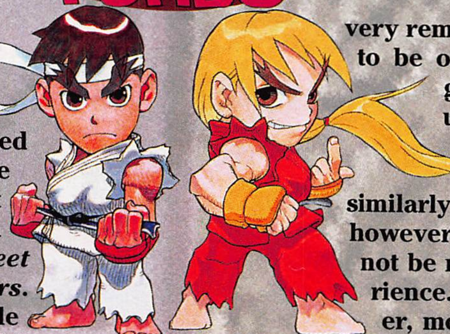







SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II TURBO

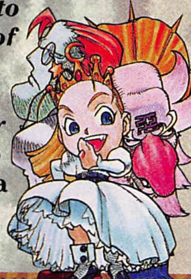





Puzzle Fighter Experiment Log, Day 1: A member of Team GameFan enters my lab, handing me a Saturn version of *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo*, and the experiment begins. Capcom has presented a rather interesting premise; to make sure their new puzzle game would have instant recognition and appeal, they spliced it in a test tube with genes from *Street Fighter Alpha 2* and *Night Warriors*. The result? An irresistible puzzle game with somewhat of a fighting game feel. You begin by choosing from a roster of popular Capcom characters, and as you play, your onscreen personae battle it out depending on how you're doing in the game. It's all wrapped up in an extremely cute and light-hearted package, and I especially appreciate super-deformed Lei-Lei, who is so adorable that I cannot get her out of my thoughts (*Note to myself: Get out of lab more often*).




Day 2: As I examine *Puzzle Fighter* closer, I begin to notice that it is a pretty simple creation. Gameplay is very reminiscent of many before it, doing little to be original or groundbreaking. Colored gems fall from the sky, you match them up with others of their kind, and your goal is to make them vanish by using the spheres which rid any similarly colored gems they touch. As I play, however, I find that while the game itself may not be revolutionary, it is an enjoyable experience. Yet, I seem to detect a deeper, more primal attraction to this game; the sheer joy of demolishing your opponent, and seeing your onscreen character do the same to their opponent, gives you a feeling of superiority and strength. Interesting.


Day 3: I find myself unable to stop playing. Each time I play, I tell myself that this will be my last game, but, upon losing, my thumb rapidly taps the start button to play again, no longer under my control. I am getting almost no sleep, and my mind can no longer ~~timk srt~~... er, think straight.

Day 4: Itchy. Tasty.

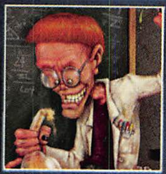






R REVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - JANUARY '97



SHIDOSHI
LEI-LEI! *(SOB!)* LEI-LEI! *(I'VE GOT TO GET OUT MORE!)*

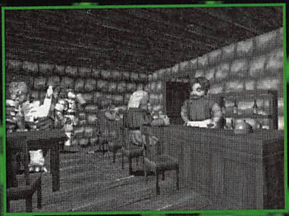






Games like this could put Sega back on top. Sonic Software Planning's sequel to Shining in the Darkness, Shining the Holy Ark, is the best 1st person RPG I've ever played. The CG and polygonal environments are incredible, the movement, fluid, and the battles... magnificent. I was expecting a good game to play over Christmas break, but what I got is beyond great. The environments now include real time towns, forests, and dungeons with amazing depth. We'll review StHA next month. SOA must hurry and get this game to you!!























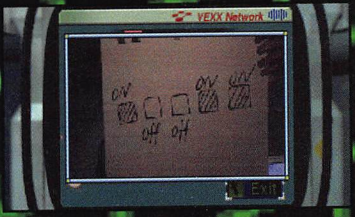
















The REAL TIME polygonal dungeons in EO add a new level of gameplay to Kenji Eno's 2nd horror epic. There's nothing quite like battling something you can hear, but not see....

Now Here's a Saturn exclusive that Sega needs badly over here. EO, the follow up to the highly acclaimed "D" sets Laura in a frightening (and I do mean frightening) environment, host to cloaking beasts which kill instinctively. There's terror around every corner. The FMV in EO is by far the highest quality yet exhibited in a Saturn title and the game is just too cool. We'll review EO next month and hopefully report on a US version.



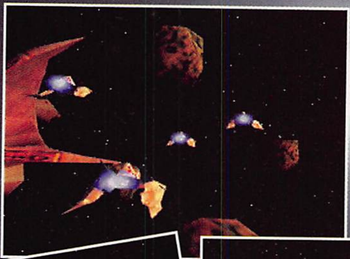














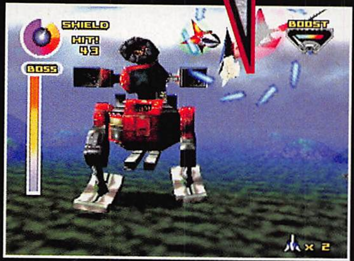




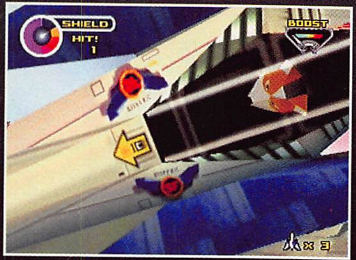
STARFOX 64

AVAILABLE 2ND QTR.
96 MEG!
AIR/GROUND ASSAULT
1-4 PLAYERS!









I can't believe Nintendo decided to launch the N64 without the game that first put "Nintendo" and "polygons" in the same sentence. It's going to be a longer wait than I had hoped, but *StarFox 64* is, at long last, a reality.

The storyline is hardly a new direction; it's actually a remake of the original *StarFox*, not a sequel, and has the same plot. But a few of the game mechanics do take the series in a slightly new direction. Intended as an intermediate step between the 1993 original and the long-since-scrapped *StarFox 2*, *StarFox 64* has both straight-ahead, forced-scrolling levels, and go anywhere-type *Cybermorph* levels. In these new, free-flying levels, Fox and crew are usually dog-fighting with a group of enemies, or attacking some ground installation. While not quite as action-packed as the standard levels, these levels put your flight skills to a much more rigorous test than the standard levels do.

Another noteworthy addition is the new, ground-based tank levels. In these, Fox rides alone on the ground, while Peppy, Slippy, and Falco provide the air support. The tank controls pretty much like the ships, but with the ability to suddenly roll left or right via the Z-Trigger and R-Button. Third, Fox, Peppy, Slippy and Falco can have a go at each others' furry throats in the special 4-player battle mode, a la *Mario Kart*. And speaking of McCloud's companions, they actually talk this time around. Not the "blip blip bleep bleep" speech they had in the original, but actual speech in actual... Japanese (well, for now).

Visually, *StarFox* is exactly what you'd expect from the N64. The frame rate is high, the textures are fantastic, and the polygon bosses and bomb effects are phenomenal. The real time intermissions, which now feature fully modeled characters (not just ships), are impressive displays of the N64's polygon capabilities. Not so impressive are the deep space levels, which, free of fog, have some very unsightly pop-up. But Nintendo's still got a month or two to go before *StarFox 64* goes into production, so let's hope they can do something about that. Judging by what we've seen thus far I can't imagine *Starfox* being anything less than yet another legendary Nintendo 64 game.





MORE THAN A MERE GAME, STARFOX WILL BE AN EVENT!

THE JOLT PACK ALLOWS THE PLAYER TO FEEL THE EXPERIENCE. TAKE A HIT AND YOU'RE SHAKIN' BABY!





"THEY WIN" - E. STORM/KID FAN, GAMEFAN MAGAZINE













MARIO KART 64

マリオカート64

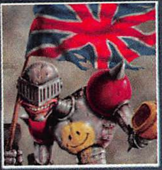
Super Mario Kart is one of the best-selling Super NES carts of all time, and with good reason: It's absolutely brilliant! SMK's balanced structure and perfect handling give it near infinite replay value, and even in this era of 64-bit consoles, gamers everywhere still find time to break out the SNES for a quick 150cc Grand Prix. No other combat/racing sim has even come close... until now. With gaming guru Shigeru Miyamoto at the helm, NCL have set out to create the ultimate sequel: a four player simultaneous 96-meg Mario Kart with 64-bit aesthetics, 16 new tracks, 2 new characters, new weapons and refined control.



R REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - NINTENDO	# OF PLAYERS - 1-4
PUBLISHER - NINTENDO	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - 96-MEG CART	AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



KNIGHTMARE
IT'S GOOD... BUT NOT *SMK* GOOD...

MARIO KART 64 REDEFINES MULTI-PLAYER ACTION!







I can't believe I'm writing this. More to the point, I can't believe I'm playing this. Not six months after the N64's debut, and already Nintendo has given me a 64-bit sequel to my favorite SNES game of all time. *Mario Kart 64* is an SMK lover's dream come true, and even though it has some problems, it's still light years ahead of anything else in its genre.




Ok, let's start with the graphics. You can get a sense of the visual quality from the accompanying screen shots, but (and I hate to use a cliche) wait till you see this baby moving. In one player mode, it's pure 30 fps texture-mapped joy, with awesomely-animated, rendered characters, detailed tracks and the best use of color this side of NiGHTS. From the moment you hit start you know that this is 64-bit power: mip-mapping, anti-aliasing, seamlessly scaling sprites – no other system can touch this. I've not a fan of the rendered 'plastic,' but it seems to work here.



The music was composed by NCL's in-house maestro, Koji Kondo, and bops along happily in the background, with a frantic final lap remix to add tension. The sound effects are of a similarly high quality, and I particularly like the way your kart produces visual cartoon 'effects,' like 'BOING' when you jump, or the letters that come off your tires when you power-slide.

16 tracks may not seem like a lot (the original had 20) but these are longer and more spectacular than anything in SMK. You'll recognize a lot of the locations from SMK, but I guarantee you've never seen them look like this. Bowser's castle has fire-breathing statues and crushing Thwomps, the Ghost House has a swarm of bats, and there's even a freeway track where you have to dodge between moving traffic! In order to accommodate the new analog control system, these tracks are wider and easier than anything in SMK, and lack the intricacy and cunning of some of SMK's more challenging courses. Case in point: Rainbow Road has no difficult turns, and in 50cc mode takes around 10 minutes to complete!

For me, the biggest question hanging over Mario Kart 64 was how would the analog stick affect the SNES control

"HEY! WHO PUT THESE SCREENSHOTS ON THE TRACK! GET OUTTA-MA WAY!"











16 KRAZY KART KOURSES TO GO KRAZY ON!!








MARIO KART 64

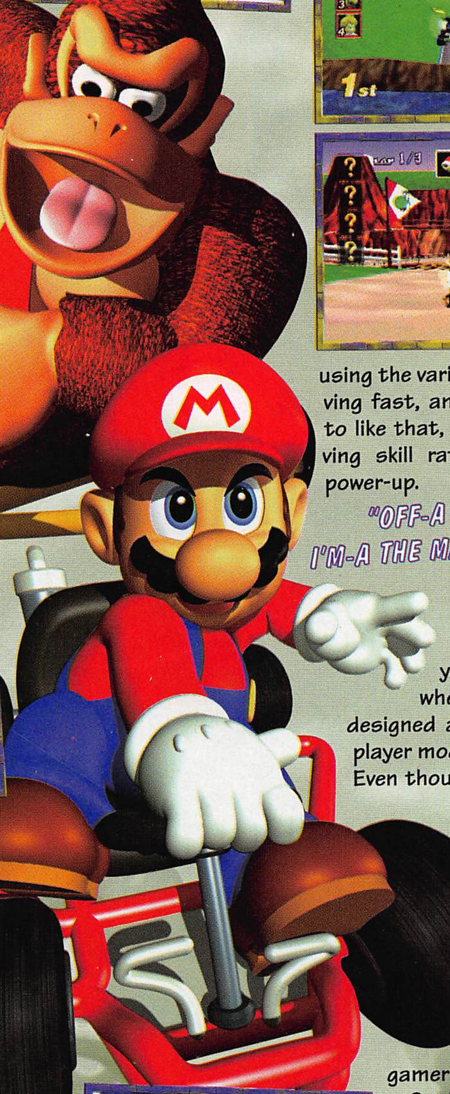
マリオカート















"HEY MARIO, YOU CHUMP! LET THIS CHIMP ON THROUGH!"

system (one of the finest in existence)? Well, for the most part, the answer is amazingly well. The karts now respond much more realistically than in SMK, and while this is 99% a good thing, SMK experts may find it tough to adapt. If you want to swerve to avoid an item, you have to start turning much earlier. The power sliding system is a work of genius (hop into the slide), but the speed you gain





is only marginal, and because the courses are so wide, it's rarely necessary. As a result, the game is much easier to just pick up and play than SMK, but the difference between an expert and novice player is not as acute.

This change is further emphasized by a shift in game structure. The different physical attributes of the various characters are much more subtle than in SMK, and because driving is easier (even on 150cc) the strategic emphasis has switched from speed to weapons. Collecting and using the various new power-ups is as important as driving fast, and although some GameFan editors seem to like that, personally I prefer a race to be about driving skill rather than getting lucky with a random power-up.

"OFF-A MY TAIL, FUZZBALL! I'M-A THE MAIN MAN AROUND HERE!"





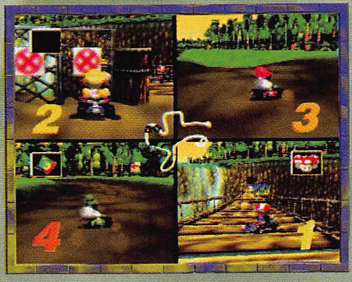
There are some problems with the CPU AI (the enemy karts in Grand Prix cheat massively to keep pace no matter what speed you go) but, unlike SMK, Grand Prix isn't where it's at. *Mario Kart 64* has been designed as a multiplayer bonanza, and it's in four player mode that the game really comes into its own. Even though there is a sacrifice in detail and frame rate (has 64-bit reached its limit *already?*), alongside *Bomberman* this is one of the most enjoyable four player console games I've ever experienced. The battle mode (with four specifically designed tracks) is also a great addition, and really takes on a life of its own with four players. It's an ideal party game, and something that every gamer should experience.

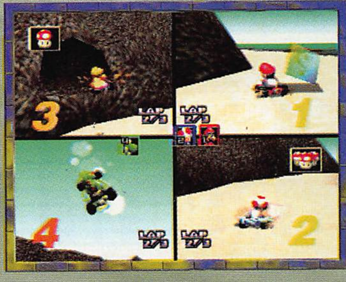
So Mario Kart 64 is yet another superb title from the Miyamoto stable. In my opinion it's not as finely tuned as SMK (I prefer the balance to be on racing), but the four player mode pretty much makes up for that. It's a shame that there are no extra options to allow you to fix the balance yourself (e.g. number of laps, frequency of weapons, e.t.c.) or that the only reward you get for beating the game is a mirror mode, but these criticisms all fall by the wayside when you get into joy of a 4 player battle. I'm a little disappointed at the new balance, but I still think this is the best N64 game after *Mario 64*, and a must-buy for SMK fans. Just be prepared for the words 'not' and 'fair' to cross your lips more than once. **K**

2, 3 OR 4 PLAYER KARTING JOY!

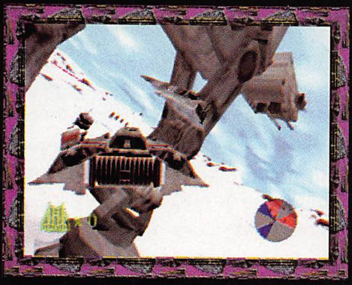


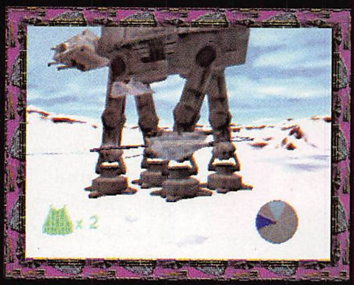






SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE









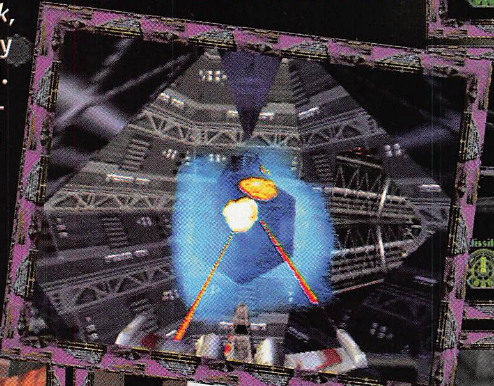
It's a testament to *Star Wars'* undying popularity that a spin-off story can create the same merchandise as a movie. We've got *SOTE* action figures, a comic book, a soundtrack, a fan club, and you guessed it, a video game.

Set in the period between *Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, *SOTE* (the game at least) tells the story of a smuggler named Dash Rendar, a mercenary who gets caught up in an evil Prince's plan to replace Darth Vader as the Emperor's right hand man. Like the SNES *Star Wars* games before it, *Shadows of the Empire* is a multi-genre title that incorporates a number of different game styles over its 10 large levels. Let's have a look, shall we?

SNOW SPEEDER (Level 1) - If you were impressed by the Mode 7 Hoth battle scene in *Super Empire Strikes Back*, wait till you get a load of this!! Awesome visuals, silky smooth frame rate, perfect control, and sampled sound. What more could a *Star Wars* fan ask for?! The 3D models of all the vehicles are remarkably authentic and even though the AT-AT's do seem to moon walk, this is probably my favorite section of *SOTE*. A great way to kick off.

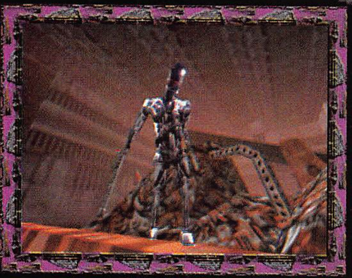
OUTRIDER (Levels 3 and 10) - Another stage taken directly from *Super Empire Strikes Back* and given a face lift. Blasting asteroids and TIE fighters on level three is fun, but it pales in comparison with the epic space battle on level 10. You are given full control of Dash's ship, and get to fly around Xizor's space station while X-wings, TIE Fighters, Star Vipers, a Star Destroyer and even the Millennium Falcon all do battle around you! Best of all, after you take out Skyhook's gun turrets, you actually get to fly inside the space station and blow







THESE BOSSES ARE TOUGH! BOBA FETT AND HIS BOUNTY HUNTER CHUMS CAN KILL YOU IN SECONDS! TAKE COVER, DASH!









REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - LUCAS ARTS
PUBLISHER - NINTENDO
FORMAT - 96 MB CART

OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - VARIABLE
AVAILABLE - NOW



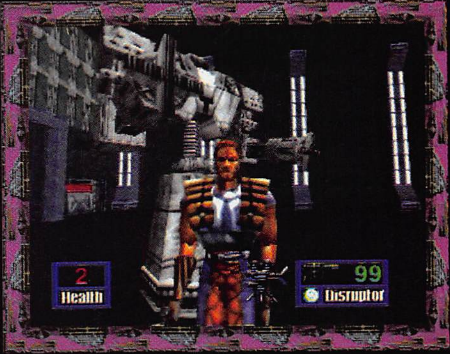
KNIGHTMARE THE NINTENDO SIXTY-FORCE WILL BE WITH YOU... ALWAYS...

up the reactor core, just like *Return of the Jedi*! It's worth buying the game just for this section alone!!





SWOOP BIKE (Level 6) - Even though this is definitely the weakest stage in the game, it's kind of grown on me. Control of the swoop bike is initially very awkward, and the way it responds to obstacles is incredibly frustrating. But once you get the hang of it, you can hit some pretty incredible speeds. The graphics are smooth, and it's nice to finally be able to see what Beggars Canyon looks like.





DASH RENDAR(Levels 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) - *SOTE*'s first-person perspective scenes are obviously influenced by LucasArts' other 3D *Star Wars* shooter, *Dark Forces*. They share the same control (jump, duck, look, etc.) and trademark *Star Wars* sound effects. Unlike *Dark Forces*, however, *SOTE* gives you multiple camera angles so you can actually see Dash in the third person, *Tomb Raider* style. Nice idea in principle, but in practice LucasArts have failed to make a system which works for both cameras.





The analog stick works well for steering, but otherwise movement and control of Dash is unwieldy. Plus, I can't believe LucasArts didn't allow you to customize your own buttons. All the available configurations have problems, and although you do get used to it, control is still weak.



Each of the 6 corridor levels has a unique setting, and range from the rebel base on Hoth to Prince Xizor's palace. They are well designed and immerse the player in an impressive 3D environment while keeping the ambient *Star Wars* 'feel'. The N64's graphical muscle is put to good use, with realistically animated polygon characters, mip-mapped textures, epic (read huge) environments and a smooth (but not super smooth) frame rate. There is mist, but only in the very far distance, and it doesn't detract from the gameplay in any way.



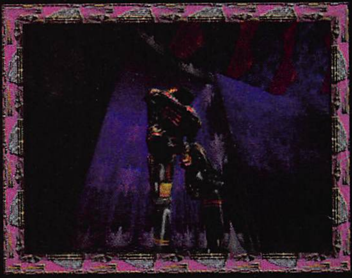


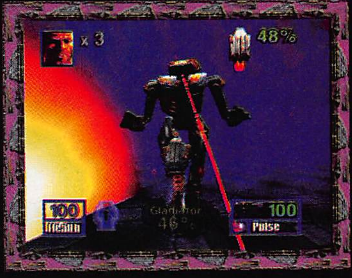
All of the stages are united by a consistent graphical and audio theme, and even though the mechanics change from level to level, you don't feel like you're playing a different game. The 15 minutes of sampled audio works much better than you'd expect, and the looped tunes are only really noticeable on long levels, like Gall Spaceport.

Overall, although it has its problems, *SOTE* manages to be greater than the sum of its parts. Even though there are only ten levels, the variable difficulty settings and hidden challenge points add replayability. Apparently, *SOTE* was sent to Miyamoto for evaluation, and he replied with a list of fixes which LucasArts only half implemented. If this is the case, then LucasArts have only themselves to blame. I'd say that *SOTE* is good game (make that a *very* good game), but not a classic. For *Star Wars* fans and N64 owners it's definitely a good buy (in my opinion the best after *Mario 64* and *WaveRace*) but with a few changes it could have been something really special. **K**

HAVE YOU FOUND ALL THE CHALLENGE POINTS YET? FIND THEM ALL ON MEDIUM AND HARD SETTINGS TO DISCOVER GAME SECRETS! DON'T BE A JOKE GAMER WHO WIMPS OUT AND PLAYS IT ON EASY. WUSS!











We've been waiting for an N64 version of *Killer Instinct* since the arcade original was first released, but no-one really quite knew what to expect. Would it be worse? Would it be exact? Well, no actually, it would be better! In their first stab at N64 development, Rare has once again achieved the impossible and converted a $2000 arcade game to a $70 N64 cartridge... and improved it!

Ok, facts before opinion. *KI Gold* is an enhanced conversion of the *KI2* coin-op, with the same number of playable characters (11 including Gargos), the same game engine and a few exclusive features, including a training mode, a practice mode (where you can see your moves like *Tekken 2*), gold/shadow characters and a host of new gameplay options (cheap juggles, early ultimates, quick openers) that can be turned on or off.

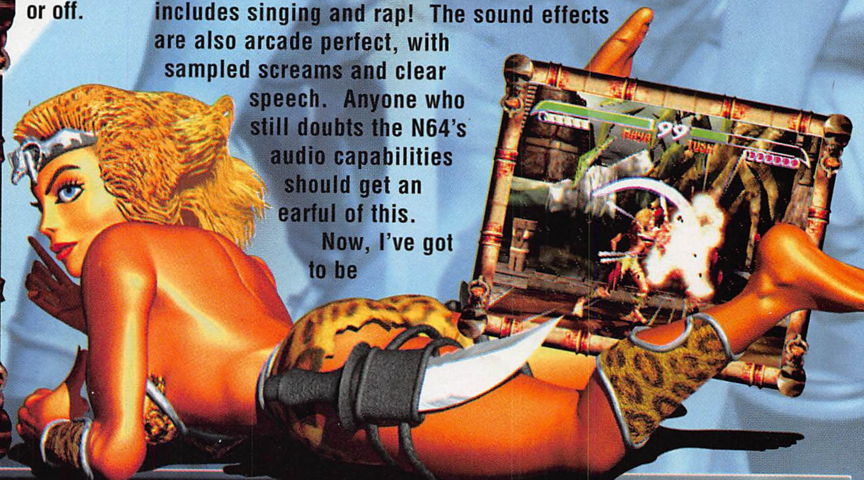


Graphically, Rare has done a great job of cramming the coin-op into a 96-meg cart, and even though there had to be some compromises, it still looks remarkably faithful to the coin-op. About 10% of the animation frames have been cut due to memory constraints, and in order to keep the frame rate up, the anti-aliasing had to be turned off. However, to make up for this there are more colors in the rendered characters, different camera angles, smoother scaling and better transparencies than the arcade. And all at a silky smooth 60 FPS.

The biggest surprise, however, are the all new real-time 3D polygon backgrounds which look (in my opinion) every bit as impressive as the arcades pre-rendered backdrops. Jago's bridge and T.J. Combo's street are outstanding, and I particularly like the way the camera swoops down through the castle hall at the start of Sabrewulf's stage.

KI2 had great music, and despite what you may have heard, *KI Gold*'s music is nearly identical. All of the coin-op's stage tunes and intermission music is intact, and yes that includes singing and rap! The sound effects are also arcade perfect, with sampled screams and clear speech. Anyone who still doubts the N64's audio capabilities should get an earful of this.

Now, I've got to be



R REVIEW

NINTENDO64

DEVELOPER - RARE	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - NINTENDO	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - CARTRIDGE	AVAILABLE - NOW

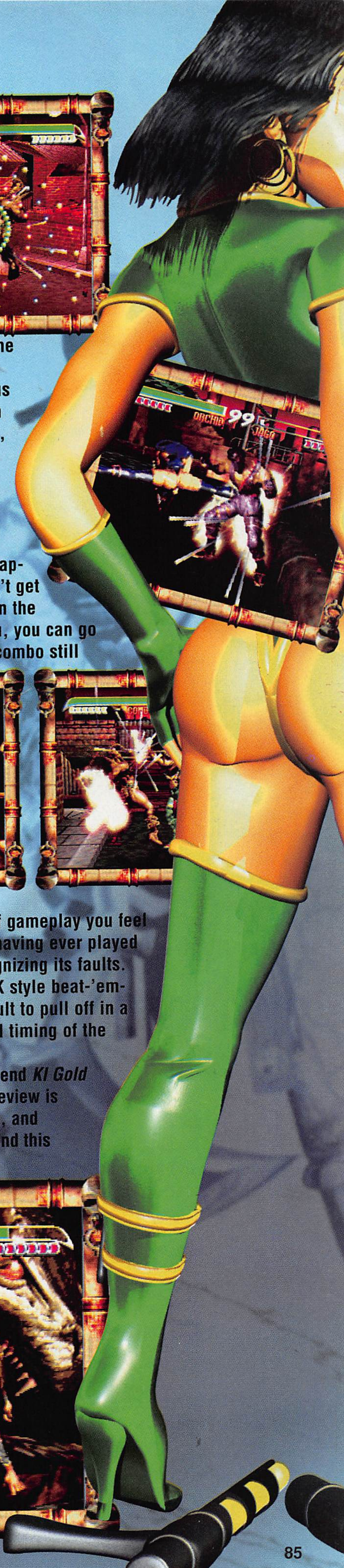


KNIGHTMARE
Look, an ULTRA COMBOOOOO! Right... Time for some tea! Back in five!









honest with you: I'm not the biggest fan of *KI*'s hybrid gameplay.

There's no doubting that *KI* fights are fast, furious and brutal, but I'm not that keen on the million hit+ ultra combo system. I appreciate that long combos are tough, and that the larger they get, the easier they are to break, but it's just not my style. It's cool that you can start a combo from the ground, take it into the air, then finish it back on the ground, but in my opinion every hit of a combo should be earned. I mean, you can pull off some pretty amazing stuff just by wiggling the pad and tapping the buttons randomly (though, admittedly, that won't get you very far against a *KI* pro). There's a standing joke in the office that when Enquirer or Hikaru start a combo on you, you can go and make a cup of coffee, drink it, come back, and the combo still

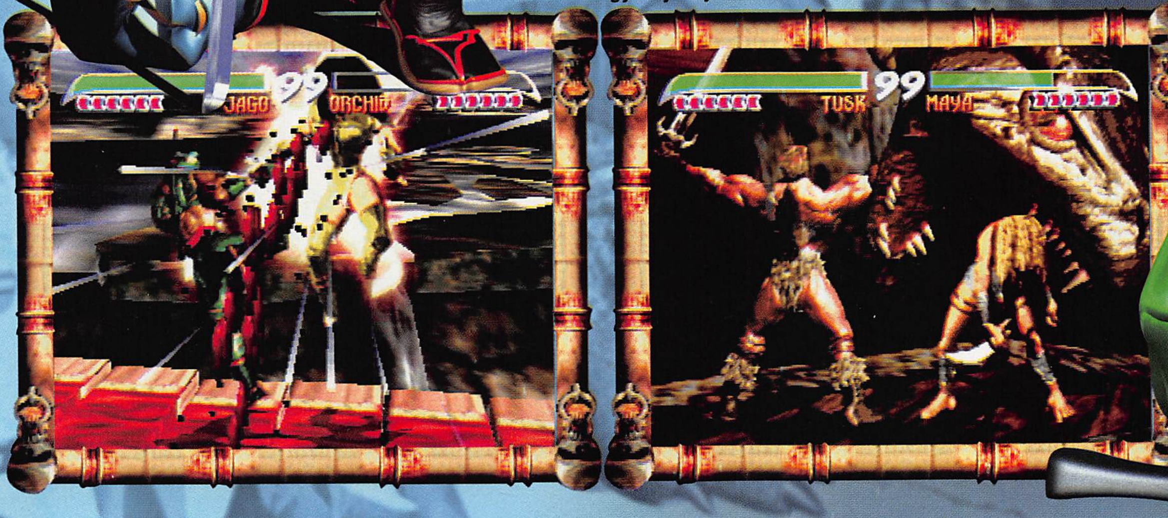




won't have finished!

I suppose what it comes down to is what type of gameplay you feel comfortable with. People who criticize *KI* without having ever played it are as foolish as those who praise it without recognizing its faults. There's a lot of technique in there, almost like an SNK style beat-'em-up, and those ridiculous combos are equally as difficult to pull off in a two player battle. Personally, I prefer the balance and timing of the *Street Fighter* series, but that's just me.

For what it is, and what it does, I would have to commend *KI Gold* as a decent fighting game. If you're a *KI* fan, then this review is pointless. You've already bought it. If you're not a *KI* fan, and you're in the market for an N64 beat-'em-up, I'd recommend this over *MK Trilogy* any day of the week. K





First the good news. If you like the arcade version of *Cruis'n USA* you're going to love this. With the N64 analog stick it handles just like the coin-op, and if anything, the graphics are even better, with mip-mapped textures and *Pilotwings*-style fade in to disguise pop up (not very well, I might add). All of the hidden cars are here (the jeep, school bus and cop car are also selectable) and there's even a split-screen two-player mode that lets you and a friend race across the country simultaneously.





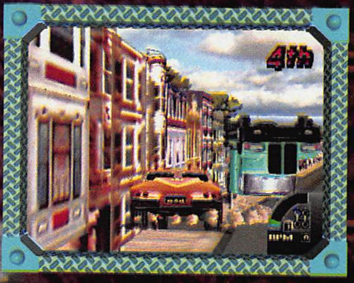
Now the bad news. *Cruis'n USA* was never a very good arcade game in the first place, and the best conversion in the world isn't going to change that. The graphics are jerky and un-realistic, the tracks are repetitive and uninteresting, the muzak is positively ear damaging (think supermarket meets elevator) and the actual play mechanics are among the most simple I've ever encountered in a driving game. Even *OutRun* had more depth! The two player mode is a little more fun, but the frame rate and pop-up are so severe with two players that it actually affects the gameplay. The only other two player mode this bad is in *Daytona CCE*, and *that* at least kept the frame rate up.





The bottom line is: If you liked *Cruis'n USA* in the arcades, you're going to like this. It's the only racing game available for the N64 at the moment, and I suppose it is kind of fun... for like, 5 minutes. But for the rest of us, *Cruis'n USA* is a substandard racing sim that offers little depth. I look at *Rage Racer* on 32-bit hardware and I look at *Cruis'n USA* on 64-bit and I wonder, where's the leap? The worst N64 game yet, and the second chink in the N64's armor. **K**



















REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - WILLIAMS	# OF PLAYERS - 2
PUBLISHER - NINTENDO	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - 64 MEG CARTIRIDGE	AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
IF YOU LIKED IT IN THE ARCADES...

DNN
DIEHARD NEWS NETWORK



WE'RE ALL DOOMED, I TELL YA!

AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAMS ENT.



TRANSMISSION BEGINS

Folks, welcome one and all to Chief 'Gunner' Hambleton's interview with the team responsible for the upcoming conversion of Doom for the Nintendo 64. Infiltrating numerous border guards and horrible frothing mutations, I was granted an audience with two of the team. During the time I spent with these two chaps, we ordered Mexican food, played an almost-complete version of Doom 64 (which incidentally, was stunning), and even talked at length about Iguana's Turok! The following makes an absorbing read for anyone even remotely interested in loading up a mini-gun and cutting down swathes of pus-filled horrors from Hell. Okay then. Let's rock! Who are those two burly marines I see striding out of the mist?

AS: My name is Aaron Seeler. I'm the lead programmer on *Doom* for the Nintendo 64.

SG: My name is Sukru Gilman, I'm a lead artist on *Doom 64*.

CH: *Good to meet you. Right, let us begin. For this conversion, how long have you been working on it, and what percentage of it is complete?*

AS: The game has been in development since about the beginning of the year, around January, or late December, so it's been about a year. We've been in preproduction earlier than that, though.

CH: *So is this a conversion?*

AS: It's a bit of a mislabel to call it a conversion, because it very much is a new *Doom*. It's not a *Doom 2*.

SG: We're not using any of the old stuff.

CH: *So what would you say; it's 50% complete?*

AS: On no, it's much farther than that. I would say it's maybe closer to being around 90%.

CH: *When is it due to release?*

AS: I think it's been targeted for the first quarter of '97

CH: *So would you probably say around March?*

SG: Probably. Around then.

CH: *How many people do you have working on it?*

AS: Around eight.

SG: We have three level designers, and we have about three artists.

CH: *Did you use any of the code from the PC or PlayStation versions, or did you start from scratch? Is there anything that you used from other versions?*

AS: Well, I was the lead programmer on the PlayStation version, so a lot of the work I had done there really gave me a good chance to know the game inside and out, so a portion of that was used; basically some of the core game algorithms which gives *Doom* it's definitive characteristics. That was mainly it. The Nintendo 64 version has a whole new rendering engine and a fair amount of the game logic got reworked, basically to take advantage more of the N64 architecture; it's got a floating point unit and it was changed in a number of areas to help it move a lot faster. So a lot of the code got changed.

CH: *Were there any of the core elements that got changed?*

AS: There were a few core elements that got changed...

SG: ...a lot of custom things...

AS: ...yeah, I mean the... I'm really not sure how to describe it... the stuff that gives *Doom* some of it's behavior, I mean things that you would expect, but a lot of things got reworked and changed and are a lot better.

CH: *For the people who have played Doom before, would they expect the monsters to remain and move in a similar sort of manner?*

AS: Yes, they're going to be moving in a similar sort of manner, there would be recognizable behavior, basically good *Doom* players are going to see that.

CH: *It's just going to look a lot more impressive...?*

AS: It's going to look and act a lot more impressively. It will be far more responsive, much smoother than the PC version, and a lot of the quirky *Doom* bugs have been taken care of.

CH: *How much of a free reign did you have for this project, or were id (the creators of the game) quite stringent about what they wanted to see?*

AS: In the beginning, they sort of set us on some sort of direction, they wanted us to be true to what *Doom* was; originally we had a lot of ideas and we were going to take *Doom* in a different direction, and they were very like; "er...no, *Doom* is like this, don't screw with the equation too much, you can do this and this and this...!"

CH: *Because I heard that you had some intention to create a slightly different look from id's original plans...*

AS: Yeah, we went off and we had sort of a minor, false tangent; we thought we would add more different types of architectural elements because we wanted to exploit the N64, to make up a bunch of architecture and bring it in, and they were like, "Cool, but that's not really *Doom*."

SG: They said, "Why don't you try it," and they saw it, and said; "...er, that's too 'Inca' for us, but why not try this?"

AS: It was very Hell-oriented. Id wes very particular about their game, and I understand perfectly, but we were allowed to experiment with some areas of the game which were changed, and then we did some stuff, and the stuff that they saw they were very pleased with, and at that point they basically said, "Okay, you guys are on track," you know, keep going in this direction, and it will come out really well.

CH: *What size is the cartridge going to be finally?*

AS: 8 megabytes.

CH: *Does the Doom 64 engine allow for true 3D level design?*

AS: Close... I would say it's hybrid 3D. It's 3D because that's what the N64 polygon engine is. Whereas the PC was a 2D hack, the levels are 3D now. There's restrictions that we put on it to maintain what *Doom* was, I mean there's no look up and look down. I mean those things aren't *Doom*, there's no flying around, for example. The stuff can be done, but it wasn't because the game wouldn't have been *Doom* then.

CH: *Can you for example, walk on a platform, jump down, turn back on yourself and walk on another platform?*

AS: You'll see... Yes there are areas in the levels where there are basically underpasses and overpasses.

CH: *Are all the levels in Doom 64 newly designed?*

AS: Yes. There's nothing that's old.

CH: *How many levels are there in total?*

AS: Approximately 30.

CH: *Are these similar in fashion to the previous Doom levels? Do you have to do the same sorts of things, like find the three keys and then exit?*

AS: Um, yes, but there's more to it now than just the three keys. That does exist because that's part of *Doom*, but finishing the level doesn't just involved getting the keys; there's much more skill and strategy that's involved now. You really have to be a master of the control; just to be able to do certain things and certain actions.

SG: A lot of things happen this time and it's pretty difficult. It's not just find the keys and open the door and you're out, you do have to solve different puzzles and you have to be paying attention.

CH: *How many secret levels are there going to be? I suppose you can't tell me since they will be secret(!), but can you give me an indication?*

AS: There's a fair amount of secrets that we've put into the game. The player will not be bored looking for secret stuff.

CH: *With secret levels, are you going to do sort of ordinary stuff or is there going to be like a theme?*

AS: There is something to the secret levels more than just 'you found a level, now go and complete it' [like Club Doom on the PlayStation].

CH: *What's the previous experience that your team has had?*

AS: The team has been on *Doom* since the PlayStation.

CH: *So you have the same people working on those pleasant sound effects; that 'music', the babies crying...?*

AS: Yeah, the team basically had so much experience doing it, and we thought we did a pretty good job.

CH: *The music on the PlayStation version had so much atmosphere to it, it was much better than the sort of jingly tunes of the original PC version.*

AS: We wanted a very dark and sinister look for *Doom 64*, that's what our strategy was, dark and sinister, so we're trying to deliver that with all of the elements.

CH: *Doom 64 had all new designs for the weapons graphically, who's decision was it to redesign them?*

AS: That was a Williams/Midway thing; that is what we were tasked to do; we were tasked to bring *Doom* to the N64 in a whole new way, something all new, so all of that was on the art side, in terms of coming up with weapons and the look of the items...

SG: ...like the monsters, for example. The Mancubus, it's got some of the features that remind you of the old style Mancubus, but it's been redesigned and the animation's been changed. He's still the Mancubus, but he's a lot different. And the Plasma Gun, it reminds you of the Plasma Gun but it's been greatly enhanced.

CH: *So they're basically just enhanced versions?*

AS: We took the elements, and we took what we thought the best part of those elements were, and enhanced and then added to it.

CH: *Are all the monsters and weapons exclusive to the N64?*

AS: Yes.

CH: *So you're not going to be making a cut-down version for PlayStation?*

AS: Not that we know of. I mean, who knows? Maybe in the future...

SG: It's just tailored for the N64, I couldn't see it working on anything else.

CH: *Are there any specific weapons that we've not seen before?*

AS: Yes. We don't want to talk about that, it's part of the plot... Well, it all weaves together...

CH: *How are the attributes of the guns compared to previous versions?*

AS: For the most part, very similar, and there's new stuff that's going to change slightly. The Plasma Gun is going to work like the rapid-fire gun that you remember...

CH: *And the BFG is still going to take out huge hoards of mutants...?*

AS: But it's going to require understanding how the weapons work a little better in terms of their spray radius and their blast radius. I mean you can just go in and start carnage but it's going to be really difficult unless you understand the fine points of the weapons.

CH: *What frame rate is the game currently running at?*

AS: 30.

CH: *Have you used the N64 custom hardware to include graphical effects?*

AS: Yes.

CH: *What sort of effects can we look for? Maybe light sourcing?*

AS: You'll see light sourcing, filtering and other effects. The alpha channels are heavily used.

CH: *Does the N64 version have more frames of animation than before?*

AS: Some monsters have, some haven't. Remember that we're making a game that's very large on a PC with unlimited storage and it hogs the RAM. As much as we would have liked to have added a bazillion frames to everything and have made it totally smooth, the reality was that it's still an 8-Meg cartridge and we still wanted a very decent compliment of levels.

CH: *Did you have any problems with memory?*

AS: Yeah, there were problems, but they've been solved, it's just part of the development process.

CH: *People are saying; "Oh, cartridges can't hold as much as on a CD" which is true, but because you have a CD, people have a tendency to waste memory, like SNK's infamous 200-meg carts that weren't compressed...*

AS: Yeah. Every byte is treated very specially on the cart, there's not a whole lot to go around, so it's a very valuable resource, every space is filled with something that is very important to begin with.

CH: *How about the N64's sound capabilities?*

AS: I couldn't answer that one because one of the other guys on the team does the N64 sound system for me, but

what I get from him is a thumbs up!

CH: *Now for a very important question: Is the BFG projectile still green?*

AS: The BFG projectile is still green. It's the BFG, you expect it to be green.

CH: *On an earlier demo, I saw three marines sprites. How are you going to handle the Deathmatch aspect of* Doom 64?

AS: Well, that was handled for us very simply; there's no Deathmatch. If it couldn't be done right, with is basically with some sort of hardware interface technology, there was no point to it. We've been ready for some sort of connecting lead for a year and a half; we were ready for it.

CH: *I think that's what a lot of people are looking for. Maybe you could put an option for multi-player mode with split screen mode and put something like a dividing board down the middle of the television! But that's the main problem; playing a Deathmatch on the same screen is not a Deathmatch.*

AS: That was the decision that I came down to. Multi-player is a neat thing to see for about five minutes, then it's like...

CH: *...I can see you, I know where to shoot.*

AS: Yeah, it works well for other games, but not for *Doom*.

CH: *Well, I guess that's answered all of the other Deathmatch questions that I had then!*

AS: I'd like to see you make some comment on that. What do players look for? Many say the Deathmatch, as there's a great deal of fun involved, we tried to take the elements that we couldn't put in for multi-player and add more to single player, so we packed more in there.

CH: *And with the three marine sprites, can you give us any clue as to what sort of secret is there, they might be, I dunno, mutated versions of yourself...? Hopefully...!*

AS: We're playing around with the idea of evil drones, there may be some drone activity...

CH: *Does* Doom 64 *make use of the analog controller? Can you play it with or without, or is it just analog?*

AS: You can play it with or without, the control in this is fully configurable for every button, everything you can do, so there shouldn't be any problem. The controller design is very unique, and we didn't want it to be affected by some people holding it one way, and others holding another.

CH: *On the PlayStation version, I reconfigure my buttons, and I strafe using shoulder buttons, I run constantly and strafe-turn as a go forward with the shoulder buttons, and this is the problem I was perceiving for the Nintendo. The two shoulder buttons mean you probably need a third hand to do it right.*

AS: It is a little bit tricky; but everybody kind of liked the d-pad configuration, the way it is set up, and with the d-pad configuration right now you can use either the digital pad or the analog pad, and they'll both do the same thing, it's just that with the analog pad you have finer control, but no shoulder buttons...

CH: *Can you actually fall any distance, or is there any sort of hideously squishy death effects if you fall too far?*

AS: If you're meaning in terms of like height restrictions inside the levels, no, there's no height restrictions.

CH: *Which is the same as* Doom... *What about width restrictions?*

AS: The levels are very vast, both in how they work and in the area that you are playing in... you have a great deal of play area.

CH: *Do you think that the analog controller works well?*

AS: Oh yeah, absolutely. I'm not quite sure why people make such a big deal about the analog controller; to me it was an easy extension of movement around, it just gives you a very fine, precise control.

CH: *Everyone's jumping on the bandwagon now, Saturn has one, PlayStation is adding one...*

AS: A lot of people were saying, "Well, can you aim the weapon with it?" and like sure, we could have, but that's not *Doom*. *Doom* has auto aim, and that wasn't something we were allowed to mess with. And we would have left it the same if we had been able to...

SG: I know there was an awkward feel when we first got the controller, but that's the only way that I play it now.

CH: *Is there going to be a memory card option or passwords?*

AS: Yes, both for internal memory and the joypad versions.

CH: *If* Doom 64 *sells well, which it should, can we expect sequels?*

AS: Sure, I would hope so. On the bulky drive, probably. That would be our next step.

CH: *I was just wondering, have you seen* Turok *yet and what do you think of it?*

AS: No. I've not seen it. I've seen screenshots, and I'm very curious to see what they're doing. I've heard mixed opinions about it, some things good, some things not as good, so I don't know what to believe.

CH: *I've seen it running, and I've played it, and it's just awesome. The only problem is the misting. But other than that, they've fixed up weapons. I've never seen weapons, including* Quake, *that looked as good as* Turok's; *they look like they're in FMV, they're that good. You can hit someone, and you have different areas to aim at. You can hit a raptor in the head and they sort of flop from side to side, spraying the screen with blood and then sort of collapse and twitch.*

AS: That does sound good. Are there a lot of monsters that you have to fight at one time?

CH: *Yes, but they slowed the frame-rate down just a hair. This was an incomplete version though.*

AS: Again, this is the speed size time trade-off. We would have done *Doom 64* with polygonal monsters, but that would have been *Quake*. With our game, it's very smooth, it holds its frame rate, which to us was very important, and having a game slow down... we don't like that very much. One more thing, having the sprites allows us to have a lot more on the screen, a lot more action, tons of monsters and tons of projectiles.

CH: *I'll be covering both games for GameFan and MegaFan, so it's not really a comparison, because I know what you guys set out to do and I know that it's an enhanced version of* Doom, *whereas* Turok *is something they have to start off all new.*

SG: They're still drafting off of *Doom*. The thing is, we have so many things different that are happening with the monsters, I'm glad we went the route that we did...

CH: *I'm not wishing to compare the two games...*

SG: We're going to be compared, you can't help it, and to me they're two different games. I don't see a problem with them both co-existing, they're two different games, they're both first person perspective games, and they have two very different themes.

CH: *In the past, Nintendo haven't liked violence. Do you think you're going to have to tone* Doom 64 *down for any sort of market?*

AS: Actually, Nintendo is really good about that, especially as we now have the rating system. We'll certainly get a mature rating. *Doom*'s been around, found it's home, it's had the blood, there's no way that they are going to take the blood out.

SG: It was really funny working on the Sony PlayStation last year. They said they had their own standard for video games. They said in writing that there should be no blood, no violence, except for games of high quality! [laughs]

AS: I think id has an agreement with Nintendo, they weren't going to put this on there unless *Doom* remained as violent as before, so I don't think they are going to say anything about it.

CH: *They're not toning down* Turok. *One of the programmers said, "If you shoot someone, it's realistic, but it's not gratuitous," that's what should happen. Whereas* Doom *is sort of more fantasy, so you can get away with more, do you think that's the case? Say, for example, when you hit someone with a rocket launcher, they don't have to explode in that much gore. Or do they?*

AS: I have to watch my step here! [laughs] Yes, they do have to explode into that much gore, of course they have to. That, to me, is *Doom*. There's nothing wrong with gratuitous stuff, it's horribly funny, and it's a great deal of fun, and that's what we were after. We were after that element. That's what we thought was one of the best elements of *Doom*.

CH: *What do you think of* Quake?

AS: It's a very, very nice game, technically astounding. It's really a special piece of software.

CH: *What would you expect the N64 version of* Quake *to look like?*

AS: Well, we're working on it right now, but I can't tell you....

I awoke dazed and lying face-down in a field. Obviously, I had heard too much. But what I did hear (and saw) readied me for the finest version of Doom *that anyone has ever seen... Get ready to repel those Demonic hordes, people!! Hell is opening up one last time!*

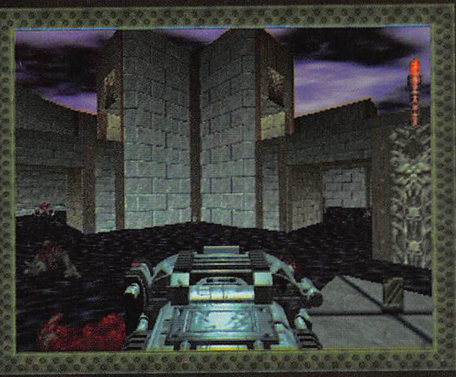
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Chief Hambleton and the rest of us at GameFan would like to thank Aaron Seeler, Sukru Gilman, and the entire Williams/Midway staff.













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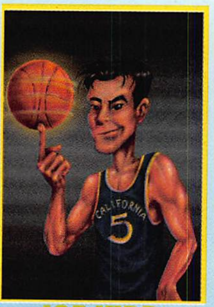
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PLUS:
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AND VR GOLF
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JOE KIDD

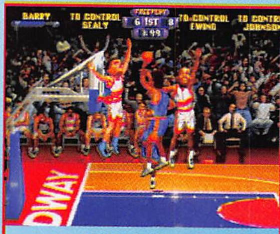

JACQUES STRAP

VIEWPOINT

"STRAP" · "JOE"

With *NBA Hangtime* Midway finally puts the *jam* back in the Jam. Not only does this version animate silky smooth, but the control with the analog stick is awesome. My favorite feature, though, is the selectable "create" mode. Bravo. Finally, the quality tunes wrap it all together... That voice, though... zzzzzzzzzzz...

G	C	P	M	O	
9	10	8	8	5	90


NBA Hangtime
Nintendo 64
Midway

"Puts up a brick" says the announcer on Prozac, otherwise this is the best version of *NBA Jam* I've yet played in or out of the arcades. Jammin' music (plus a bonus rap track at half time), great animation, smooth control and more options than ever before make *NBA Hangtime* the quintessential *Jam*. I've done it before and swore to never do it again, but I'll make an exception this time.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	7	8	5	89

Just like *NBA Jam* (in so many ways), *Open Ice* is appealing 'cause it's so darn fun to play. You're given big name NHL stars to relate to, ultra-simplistic play-mechanics, and fast gameplay speeds. For some, this doesn't sound like much of a game, but there's something undeniably kinetic and addicting about *Open Ice*. Although bested by *Gretzky* in this category, PS players should have no problem enjoying hours and hours of wild, unrealistic 3-on-3 hockey action. Good conversion, too.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	8	9	6	6	73

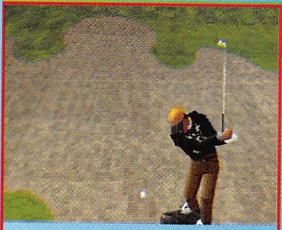

Open Ice
Playstation
Williams

You know, I had a lot of fun playing this game. I get caught up with the realism of sports games so much, sometimes I forget how fun a good-old-fashioned-bang-'em-up-and-score-a-bunch-of-goals, kind of hockey game is to play. Makes you feel like you actually exert a certain level of skill and ability, reflected by the dozens of goals you score! Any game that strokes my ego like that, and still remains entertaining is a winner with me.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	8	9	7	7	85

The best golf game available on the Saturn. Why? Well, straight-up: It moves. *PGA Tour '97* is some kind of still-frame re-draw travesty, and *VR Golf* is a real-time 3D golf game. Sure, the frame rate ain't so hot, and the course-side scenery goes Lego when it's in your face, but you're allowed the liberty of viewing everything in full 3D (and that's cool). Technicalities aside, *VR Golf* has all the necessary options, fine control, and great in-play fringes (views, replays, club selection, etc.). Nice courses and good sound round out this winner.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	8	7	7	7	78

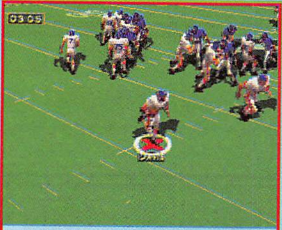

VR Golf
Saturn
VR Sports

I was pleasantly surprised with *VR Golf* and think it is one of the best golf games I've played on a CD format. The play is smooth and the course has very nice contours in the fairways, not usually found in golf games. The most distinctive part of the game is the different camera options you can select. There are various split-screen angles, as well as the ever-popular picture-In-picture screens. Overall, this game is simple and fun to play.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	8	8	8	8	85

Will *Madden* be dethroned by Sony's monster football release? No, but *GameDay '97* is the closest anyone has come thus far. The gameplay is much tighter this time around, thanks to a cool re-worked AI that'll spot ya from a mile away if you think you've found THE play. Other sterling new features include an awesome (straight outta *GameBreaker*) 3D engine, powerful new plays, and wicked control over the running game. Make this your second football must-buy, if you must buy a second football game.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	9	8	8	89


NFL GameDay '97
PlayStation
Sony

The closest *Madden* clone yet, with smooth play and nice graphics. The timing is very realistic, and the AI plays smart, as it should. It comes up a tad bit short of *Madden*, but the commercials are more entertaining. One thing about it is that it's easier to play than *Madden*, without losing any of the realism, which was comforting. I had a great time playing this game.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	9	8	8	92

Surprisingly, EA's Saturn sports titles have been equal to or better than the PS versions. The same is true with *NHL '97*. Yep, these are some truly blocky (as in not too many polys) players, but the animation rocks and the frame rate is great. The play mechanics are hot; this feels like the 16-bit *NHL* games all over again, 'cept in a cool new set o' threads. One should never doubt the sports power of EA... they give you the license, the best options, and rock-solid gameplay, every year.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	8	9	7	8	91


NHL '97
Saturn
EA

Well, EA has put out the best hockey game on any platform to date. The realism and stats are of course, second to none. EA spares no detail in trying to accurately simulate the real game, in any game. The motion-capture technology is apparent, and game play is smooth-as-ice-ice-baby. I'm curious how it looks when they get into a fight; I tried and tried, but wasn't successful enough to throw off my gloves, but I'm sure that's pretty real too. EA is synonymous with the real thing.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	9	9	8	8	92

GameFan Sports Preview

NBA Shoot Out '97

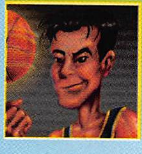
Wow, I can't believe there's another great basketball game on the market. I didn't think any game had a chance of competing with *NBA Live '97* or *In The Zone 2*, but looks like *Shoot Out* will have the goods. Comes complete with season stat-tracking, trade options, free agency and player creation options that have become the standard for top-flight basketball games. Cumulative stats and averages are updated and shown not only throughout the season, but throughout the game. The graphics are great, giving you some of the shiniest hardwood in the league. This is also the first basketball game that I've seen that actually allows you to strip the ball out of the player's hands on the way up, rather than the traditional block. Lots of other great stuff too, but looks like it needs to do a little work to overcome the Big Two, but has an excellent frame to work with.







KIDD'S CORNER



Well the 1996-97 college basketball season is upon us, and Kansas University looks poised to take it all. I can't help but draw parallels to the Duke of old with Laettner, Grant Hill and Hurley, instead now we've got La Frentz, Pierce and Jacques Vaughn, with a healthy supporting cast. Of course, we have the ultra-powerhouse over at Kentucky, but just like the UNLV squad of semi-pro athletes that went down in flames to Duke, so must Kentucky fall. Look for Kansas to take it all. The Bulls have just lost 2 in a row, first time that's happened in years, and just dodged a 3rd. While the Bulls are having their problems, the Heat and Riley are on the rise in the East, while it looks as if Barkley's presence in Texas makes Houston the front runner in the early season West. But I don't know about Hakeem, maybe he should retire with his heart condition, although worst case scenario, if he died, he would die doing what he loved most... yes, several other athletes have literally died on the court/field from the same thing! Dennis Rodman just got fined over $100,000 for using profanity and telling off the refs, think that'll stop him? ...Always quotable, Ted Turner, President/Owner of TNT and the Atlanta Braves recently said on religion, "God's not gonna send me to hell for sleeping with women and having a few drinks... I don't need some naked guy on a cross to save me!" I don't want to be within arm's length of him on Judgement Day... In the NFL, the playoff picture has taken form, and believe it or not, there may be a changing of the guard. Although still the favorites, the 'Niners and Cowboys are no longer clear cut winners. Teams like Denver and Green Bay have emerged as the teams to be reckoned with this year, but will be tested all the way to the Big Dance. Teams like Carolina have the 'Niners' number, and upsets will be abundant, as they have been all year; games have been harder to call this year than the Holyfield victory over Tyson. Yes! Holyfield VICTORY over Tyson! Was that not the single most Rocky-esque sports story of the year? Unbelievable, and fantastic for the sport in my opinion, although opinions have been mixed on that subject. The hottest sports game on the market right now is *NBA Live '97*. The response has been wild, and hoops fans in particular are gobbling it up big time, as EA sits pretty in their familiar spot of #1 on the charts. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to write to me c/o Gamefan Magazine, or my e-mail address is: rlee@metropolismedia.com Feel free to contact me at any time.









MAJOR SCORE!

2 ON 2 MIDWAY OPEN ICE™ CHALLENGE

As promised, Strap's back with the *Open Ice* review. Little has changed between our last preview and the final, which means the game is still an extremely close translation of the arcade.

Having played the arcade *Open Ice* many, many times, I can clearly see what made it to the PS intact. The rink seems to be a tad smaller than in the arcade, but the line-scrolling is smooth and exact. Otherwise, the player animation is good, and the sound, music, and voice are right on. Don't get me wrong, the arcade isn't terribly impressive, and any current next-gen system could probably handle it. All the NHL teams and top superstars are playable, and each are rated in several skill categories. Matter o' fact, *Open Ice* is all about gameplay...

Three easy words describe *Open Ice* play-mechanics: *Jam* on ice. One button cranks your turbo, one passes, and another shoots. You can super-power your passes and shots by simply holding the turbo down before you nail the puck. Now, according to where you are in relation to the goal, a turbo-powered shot will often send your player into a special move before he releases. So you're flyin' through mid-rink, you split the defense, pass to your teammate, he passes it back, you slam down the turbo, and BOOM! A gravity defying back-flip slap-shot sails through the five-hole! Score the hat trick (three goals straight in this case) and your player's "On-fire" with a maxed-out turbo-meter until the other team scores. Now you can rove around like a madman, torching the net with fireball wrist-shots and pummeling opponents with super-checks!

Open Ice may be incredibly simple in design, but you'd be surprised just how much brainless fun it can supply. And there's a wicked four-player mode, so get your buddies in on a few games. One final note: The only game that compares (quite favorably, I might add) to *Open Ice* is *Gretzky 3D Hockey*, reviewed by yours truly in issue 11. N64 and PS owners should check it out. ***JS***





HE'S ON FIRE!





TURBO TIME!







GAMEFAN SPORTS

R REVIEW

PlayStation

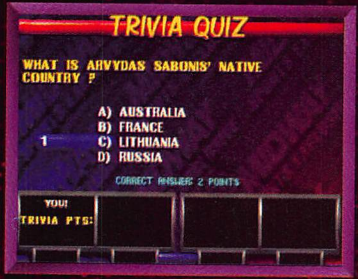
DEVELOPER - MIDWAY	# OF PLAYERS - 1-4
PUBLISHER - WILLIAMS	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



JACQUES STRAP
WHERE'S THE BIG HEADS?







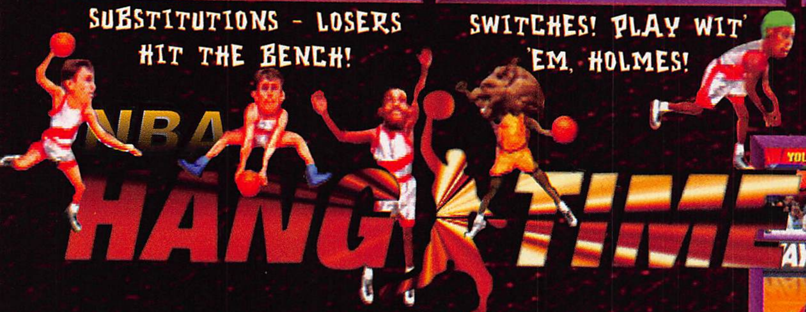


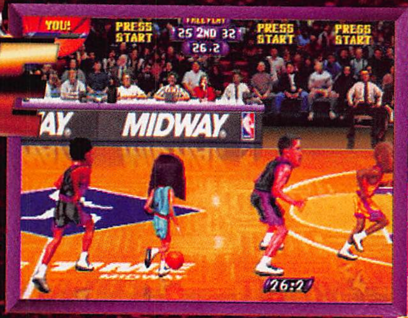
SUBSTITUTIONS - LOSERS HIT THE BENCH!

SWITCHES! PLAY WIT' 'EM, HOLMES!

TRIVIA QUIZ! R YA SMART - OR DUMB AS A ROCK?

CREATION MODE: MAKE A MONSTER!!







MIDWAY POLISHES UP THE JAM ENGINE AND DELIVERS SOME SERIOUS HANGTIME!

GAMEFAN SPORTS



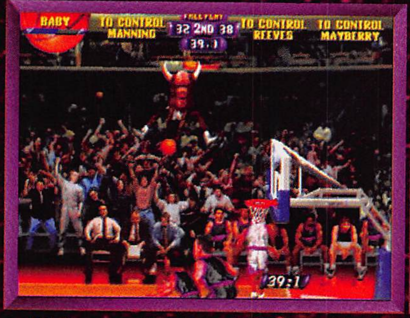
REVIEW

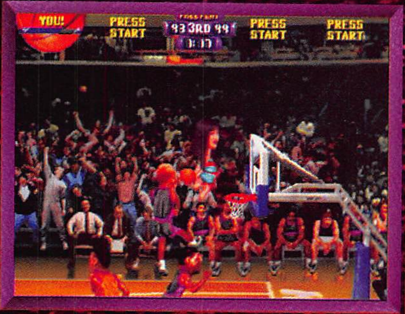
PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - MIDWAY
- PUBLISHER - MIDWAY
- FORMAT - CART
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-4
- DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
- AVAILABLE - NOW



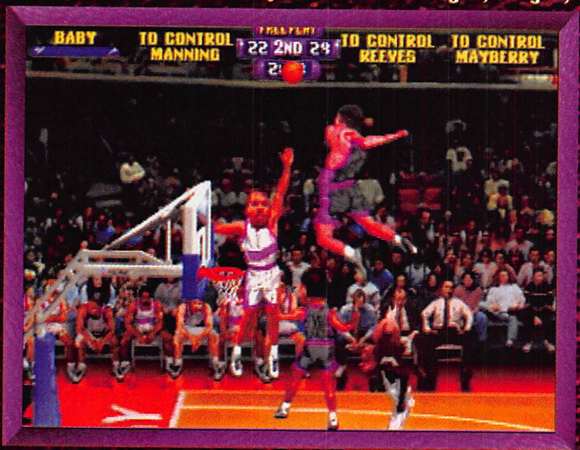
CHIP
HANGIN' WITH THE JAM...





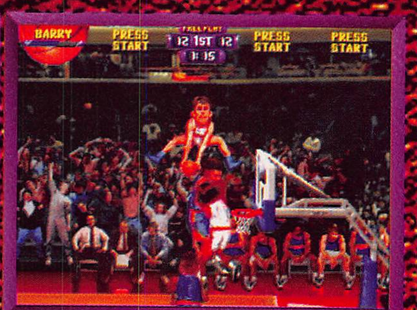


Make no mistake, *NBA Hangtime* is *NBA Jam*. However, while it looks (for the most part) and plays the same, it doesn't necessarily feel the same. Midway's won back the engine, tagged on a new name and done some heavy chinga, creating the first version since the original worthy of further investigation. The most notable change in my opinion is the ability to completely build the combatants. In the Create Player mode you're not only privy to a vast quiver of heads but you can alter weight, height, attributes, and uniforms as well. Aside from this instantly selectable feature, you get two additional reasons to hang with *Hangtime*. First, the analog control over the extremely well animated characters is a joy and second, the music (especially the full on rap tune at the half) is very cool. You'll miss the wicked chops of Tim Kitzrow (the only man alive with true boom-shaka-laka) as the new guy just kind of drones along, but otherwise the audio's mighty fine. The graphics are highly animated even deep in to the crowd, parallax is abundant, and the frame rate's as smooth as Jordan's shiny head. The actual players are perfectly represented and four can play in what will ultimately go down in history as the best version of this fine game ever, courtesy of Williams and the Nintendo 64. It's not 3D all up in your face buy any means, but if the ultimate *Jam* is what you seek, *Hangtime* delivers, big time. C

















St. Andrew's GOLF





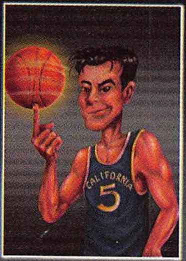
GAMEFAN SPORTS



REVIEW

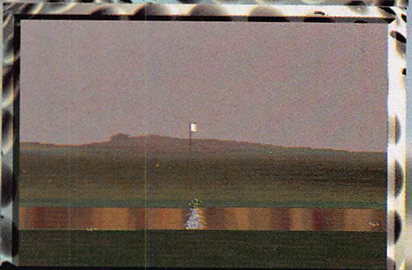
NINTENDO 64

- DEVELOPER - SETA
- PUBLISHER - SETA
- FORMAT - 64 MB CARTRIDGE
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-4
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



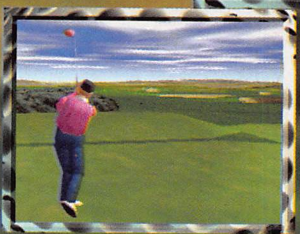
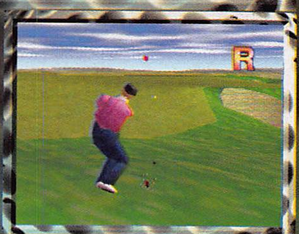
JOE KIDD
A golf game you can appreciate.

While things in the world often seem like they're on a downward spiral, it's nice to know video golf games keep getting better and better. *St. Andrew's Golf* has become my newest, bestest security blankie. Just the other day, while playing a competitor's golf game, I remember thinking to myself, "Why can't they just make a golf game that's got some of those great 3D graphics that I see in non-sports games?" And just like that, a copy of *St. Andrew's* appeared on my desk – little did I know what lay before me. I slipped into total and complete, divot-slinging heaven. The rolling hills of legendary St. Andrew's stretched out before me past the lingering fog, the light morning drizzle,



PRECISION IS CRUCIAL, OR YOU MAY END UP IN THE DRINK!



the lush green fairways, reflections of bold Scottish architecture dotting the grounds, and of course the infamous and abysmal bunkers – all in beautifully 3D rendered environments. Yes, completely 3 dimension-al, even the horizon scrolls along with your player's advance. Just as people tune into the Fireplace Channel during the holidays, the realism of these sun-rises will give you a gorgeous view while you take in a bowl of Captain Crunch in the morning. With the advantage of this game being on the N64, you no longer have to wait an eternity to load each hole. Instead you can pass through any foursome ahead of you and finish 18 before your 8 o'clock meeting. Another pleasant surprise exclusive to N64, is a golf swing totally con-trolled by an analog pad. No more of the ultra-precision, swing-o-meter, where pressing the 'X' button is as easy as 1-2-3. Instead, you bring it back right to the power level at which you desire, with as much control as you have in the real thing, along with a pace that will comfort you. Golf is a game of rhythm, and finesse, not





whether or not you can press a but-ton when the marker hits the red zone. The sand traps will have you throwing your hands up just like the pros, as you find yourself flush against a wall taller than your-self; a virtual impossibility, in trying to get the trajectory of your shot to go 90 degrees. This is a treacherous predicament as you can go into the hole 3 under and upon com-pletion of the hole, find yourself 3 strokes over!

Aside from slightly irritating musical accompaniment, the game is a winner for golf enthusiasts, and gives you a little taste of Scotland at the same time. ***JK***



"THE INFAMOUS AND ABYSMAL BUNKERS WILL HAVE YOU THROWING YOUR HANDS UP JUST LIKE THE PROS, AS YOU FIND YOURSELF FLUSH AGAINST A WALL TALLER THAN YOURSELF; A VIRTUAL IMPOSSIBILITY, IN TRYING TO GET THE TRAJECTORY OF YOUR SHOT TO GO 90 DEGREES."






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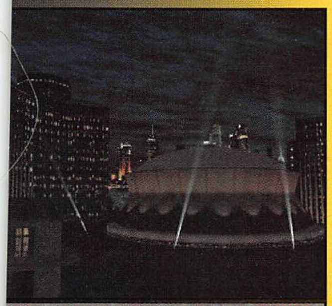
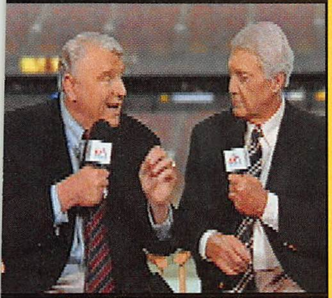
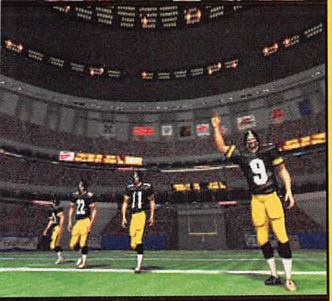
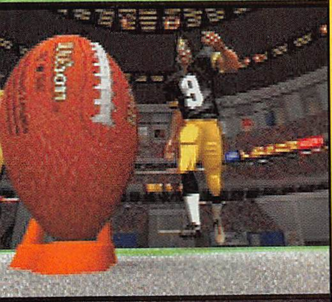
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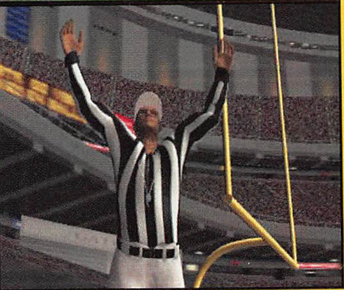
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MADDEN 97

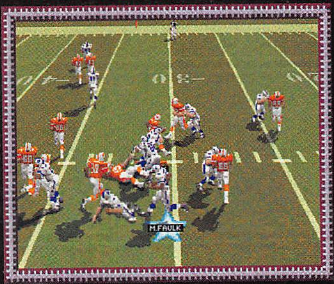
Ever since the beginning of *Madden* in 16-bit format, EA has been at the top of the charts. Now, not only is *Madden* available on all platforms including PC, but the same "Brute-Force" AI is intact and consistent across the board; an EA priority and a precedent in sports games. They say imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, as football games spring up everywhere, trying to emulate and bask in the success of *Madden*, but in the end, they all bow to their predecessor.

Madden has become somewhat of a "social gathering" whether it be with professional athletes on the road, frat house parties, or simply an after-school activity. The *Madden* craze will be upon us bigger and badder than ever before, so now is the time to bone up. On the following pages, you will find a list of EA's personally ranked, highest rated plays and strategy tips to give you a balanced attack of power running, efficient air attack, glove-like defense, and cutthroat special teams. In a day and age where a game of *Madden* is synonymous with, "Let's take this one outside!", you've now equipped yourself with the best training guide available to take out the opponent. Have fun and happy sacking.

The Running Game

Your running game will determine the success of your offense. Rushing sets the tempo of your attack by wearing down the defense and opening up the air zone. The following tips will help you keep the ball on the ground successfully, no matter who you have in the backfield.

1. **Follow your Blocks.** In *Madden '97* the key to running the ball is reading your blocks. Just like the NFL, Emmit Smith is not the fastest, nor the strongest, but he is arguably the best at "finding the holes" that his enormous lineman create. If you follow your blockers, and let the play develop, your patience will reward you with openings toward the goal line. Breaking tackles is possible depending on your back, but never a sure thing, therefore insure yourself by keeping one of your men between you and the defender.



2. **Accept a Loss.** If your worthy opponent has guessed right and it's evident you will be caught for a loss, the best alternative for you is to "accept the loss" and resist the temptation to run backwards. Inevitably you will only lose more yardage.

3. **Speed Bursts.** When using the speed burst, you want to save it for precisely the right moment. Hit the speed burst just as you make your move through the hole and break up-field.

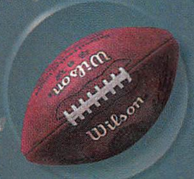
In a situation where the defense is coming down strong on you, try using your speed burst just as you cut back against the grain and catch the D off guard; resulting in defensive over-pursuit, and extra yardage for you.

4. **Mix up your Running Plays.** By selecting a variety of run plays (i.e. sweeps to the outside), you'll spread out the defense, open up the inside running game, keep them honest and most importantly, build a foundation for your passing game.




5. **Time Management.** When the game is in hand, run the ball. This is why it is key to have a good running game. Let the play clock run down as far as you can and then begin your play. (More on Time Management later)

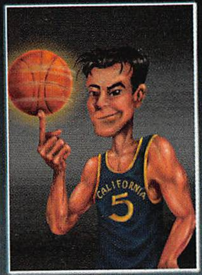
GAMEFAN SPORTS



STRATEGY

PLAYSTATION, SATURN, SNES, GENESIS, PC

DEVELOPER - EA
PUBLISHER - EA
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-8
DIFFICULTY - DIFFICULT
AVAILABLE - NOW



JOE KIDD Don't forget you mouth-guard!

The Passing Game

Efficiency is the name of the game. You must really learn how to find your rhythm and read the defensive coverage quickly as the quarterback; if you don't, you'll either end up on your back, or find yourself recording more INT's than touchdowns. Learn from the following how to get the most out of your passing attack.

1. **Timing is Everything.** In order to be successful in executing pass plays, you need to wait for the play to develop and patterns to take form before getting rid of the ball.




2. **Throwing Under the Zone**. Throwing under the zone is key in many of the pass plays. Find the plays that achieve this (quick slants and passes), and make long yardage out of short passes.

3. **Positioning**. In some of the shorter routes, it is essential to have your receiver get in front of the defensive back to make the reception. Skilled Receivers. Receivers with above-average talent have exceptional ability to fight the defender for position and catch the ball.

4. **Multitude of Receivers**. By selecting 4 or 5 receiver sets, this forces the opponent's hand into at least one of the receivers having single coverage. Of course, the more players you have going down field, the less you have to protect the QB; so know where your receivers are gonna be.

5. **Use your Backs**. If you can't find a receiver open, instead of forcing the pass, look for one of your backs in the flats as a safety valve.

BEST OFFENSIVE PLAYS!

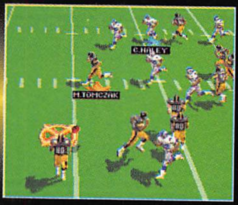
The following are the most effective plays for gaining: short, medium or long yardage.

SHORT YARDAGE (1-3 YDS.)

I Form, 2TE, Power Strong
Lots of power blocking – use the speed burst as you hit the hole.



I Formation, 2TE, HB Wham
Get the fullback going in front of you to pound out the much needed short gainer.



Near, Normal, HB Delay
It allows the D-Line to penetrate while the running back sneaks past them with the ball.



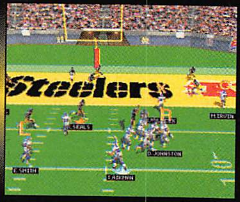
Single Back, TE Motion, HB Dive Right
The key for both plays is to use the man in motion as an extra blocker. Put him in motion and snap the ball when he gets about where the hole your running back will go through is.



Pro Form, Normal, Quick Post
Let the QB take a short drop and then fire it to the outside receiver. This is good for a couple yards, unless you wait to long and let the DB get a jump on the ball.



Pro Form, Normal, All Streaks
This is a good play if you catch your opponent sleeping in a run defense.

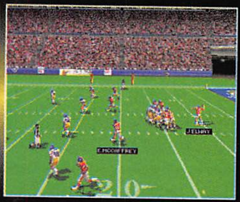


MEDIUM YARDAGE (4-8 YDS.)

Shotgun, Normal, Quick Hitch
Throw as receiver turns back and defensive player is behind the receiver.



Shotgun, Normal, Quick Slant
With a good receiver you can even break this to a much larger play.



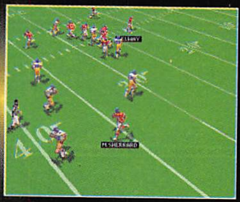
Pro Form, Normal, Weak Flood
Send everyone deep then hit the back out of the backfield.



Pro Form, 3WR, Comeback
Throw to the WR on the right doing the comeback.



I Form, Normal, Out and Ups
If you can hold the ball long enough, throw to the WR on the left.



I-Form, Normal, TE Fade
Bring the flanker in motion and when he gets to the other side of the field, throw it to him, quick! This play keeps the defense off guard.



Near, 2TE, HB Inside
This is a good play when the defense is set up to defend the pass.



Near, Normal, FB Circle
Hike the ball and immediately throw it to the TE on the seam. Watch him split the safeties and run for a nice gain.



Far, 3WR, Weak Flood
Pass to either back coming out of the backfield. This is effective when defense is sagging.

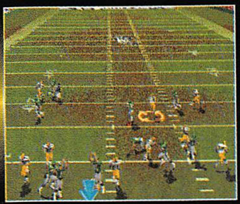


LONG YARDAGE (9+ YDS.)

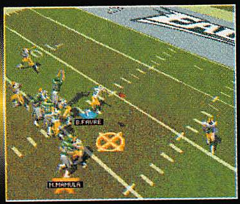
I-Form, 3WR, Square In
Sub in your best WR in the Slot on the Right and throw the ball deep to him.



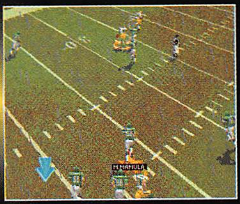
I-Form, Normal, QB Slant
Depending on the defense, this can be really effective for the long gainer. Receiver to throw to depends on linebacker.coverage.



I-Form, 3WR, Post Corner
Depending on the defense, you can throw over or under the coverage.



Single Back, Normal, Flea Flicker
Mixes up the coverage and then throw deep.



Pro Form, Normal, Quick Post
Hit the tight end quickly against a zone defense.



Single Back WR Breakout
Hit the receiver on the deep out.



DEFENSE:

No matter how lethal your offense is, if you can't stop the opposition from moving the ball on you, you won't have very much success. Most of you already know the fundamentals; now it's time to get aggressive and get the defensive edge.

Rushing the Passer



Take the outside approach to the QB. It is tough to get to the QB running straight up the middle and at him. By taking an outside approach to the QB, you create a one-on-one situation where you have one man to beat. If you can get close enough you can either sack him or force him to run up the middle where the rest of the D-line should be waiting for him.

Another strategy is to focus on stopping the pass. If you are a good run stuffer, you can call a zone defense and use the Free Safety to play in the secondary. If you like to gamble, jump in a blitz defense and play man-to-man once the ball in is the air.

Defending the Pass

If the pass rush breaks down, the QB will have time to find the open receiver. The key to defending a pass is beating the receiver to the ball. As soon as the ball is in the air switch to the closest defender and then get him in position to deflect or intercept the pass. Now you must react to where the ball is about to land. On a quick slant, it may be too late to defend the pass, but an effective strategy is to make a calculated dive at the time of the pass and try and knock the ball out. At least you will be able to make an immediate tackle. For short yardage, drop a defensive lineman into coverage, especially against a back coming out of the backfield or the tight end.



Tackling: Technique vs. Power Hits

Only use the power tackles if you have help behind you. It is a very risky move and should only be used at close range and for must-stops like short yardage. Dives are also risky but effective. If you are behind a ball carrier and he is about to score then it is obviously worth the risk. Otherwise, dive when you have the support of linebacker and defensive backs there to help out if you miss. Contain, Contain, Contain!!! In long yardage situations play it safe and let the computer controlled players make the tackles. You play clean up. Just make sure he does not get by you and pick up the first down.



BEST DEFENSIVE PLAYS!

The following are the most effective plays for defending against: short, medium or long yardage.

SHORT YARDAGE (1-3 YDS.)



Goalline 81, Blaze
If you know they are going to run, this one is killer. If they pass, you're in trouble.



Goalline, Man Left 2
Puts everyone after the backs but leaves two back for short pass coverage.



Goalline, Left/Right
If he is going to run and you want to guess which side, guess correctly and you will stop it.



Goalline, Middle
This puts all the big boys on the line side by side and lets them overwhelm the offensive line, an excellent short yardage run stopper.



3-4, 52 Wildcat
This defense spreads out the D-Linemen and outside backers across the line and makes it tough for the offense to run anything to the outside.



4-3 Double, Blitz
Blitzing linebackers give extra defense against short yardage.

MEDIUM YARDAGE (4-8 YDS.)



4-3, Tuf Bronco
This is a solid defense against the run, but at the same time, it puts pressure on the QB. Use the middle linebacker in coverage on the TE or blitz up the middle.



4-3, Man Right/Left
Call the one that gives man coverage to the wider side of the field.



3-4, 53 out
Good defense to stop the short/mid wide plays.



4-6, 46 Cover or Monster
This puts a lot of pressure on the QB from all angles. But if you don't get to the QB quick, he might burn you for a deep one.



4-3, Cheat Left/Right
Same as goalline left/right but LBs stay out for pass coverage.



4-3, Zone Double
Double coverage on main receiver with zone coverage and decent pass rush.

LONG YARDAGE (9+ YDS.)



Nickel Crashman
Great pass defense, especially if you have good personnel.



Nickel Double Out
Doubles up the receivers and gets good middle field coverage.



Nickel Double Gold
Same as ND Out but puts more pressure on the QB.



Dime 3Deep
One of the better prevents, if you are going to use one.



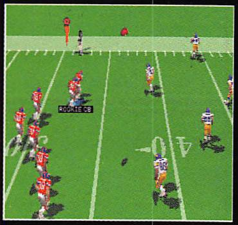
Dime Prevent One
Prevents giving up the big play and still allows for decent coverage.



4-3 RCB Blitz
This can be risky and can leave your opponent open for a big gain. Sneak the right corner, back up to the line and then charge in for the QB.

SPECIAL TEAMS AND GENERAL TIPS

1. Onside Kicks: Execution and Defense.
To execute you want to tap it as fast as possible or wait until the power drops back down to zero. You also want to move the directional bar halfway to one side or the other. There is no advantage to kicking it straight ahead. To defend you want to take the nearest player to the ball once the ball is kicked and start steering that player to where the ball is going to land. Once you have the ball, run away (down screen) from the oncoming players so you can avoid a big hit once you get the ball.



2. **Kickoff and Punts.**

- Coverage:

Take the fastest guy and try and contain ball carrier. Let the computer controlled players make the tackles and don't go for the dive. Stay in front of the return man and make sure he does not get by you. A lot of players like to go for the big hit, but a miss usually gives up big return yards.

- Returns:

Wait for wedge to form defense to commit, and then run it outside. Get what you can, and do not run backwards.



3. **Audibles: When to Call Them.**

You have to learn to read the defenses. Best case scenarios are short yardage. Many teams will go into a strictly run defense formation like goalline. If you can, audible to a pass play. If the defense comes to the line in a Dime, audible to a run and get some easy running yards. You want to be able read stuff like where the Safeties are, where's the double coverage, and are they about to blitz. On offense it is a good idea to set all of your audibles to the same formation so you don't give away your play. On defense it is good to have a short yardage run, a standard run, and a standard pass defense so you can match the offense formation.

4. **Time management.**

No reason to give your opponent any extra time with the ball. If the clock is against you, you want to force the other team to pass. If they run, and there is less than three minutes remaining, you may want to start using your time-outs. If you can, chase them out of bounds. Smart players will keep the ball in bounds. Lastly, use the two-minute warning to your advantage. Be aware of when it is and how many plays you can get off or prevent happening in that time span.

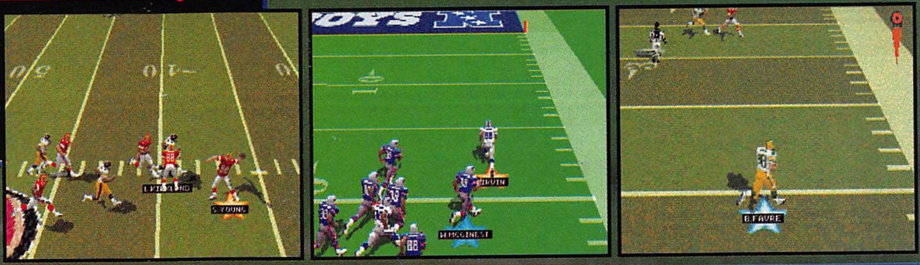
EA's Top-Rated Madden Running Teams/Backs:

1. DALLAS (Emmit Smith)
2. Detroit (Barry Sanders)
3. Philadelphia (Ricky Watters)
4. Indianapolis (Marshall Faulk)
5. Pittsburg (Jerome Bettis)



EA's Top-Rated Madden Passing Teams/Players:

1. SAN FRANCISCO (Young, Rice, Jones)
2. Dallas (Aikman, Irvin, Sanders, Novacek)
3. Green Bay (Favre, Brooks, Chmura)
4. New England (Bledsoe, Coates)



EA's Top-Rated Madden Offenses:

1. DALLAS
2. Oakland
3. Philadelphia
4. Detroit

MADDEN Genesis Codes:

1. "Disco" (All 70's)
2. "Happy Days" (All 50's)
3. "New Wave" (All 80's)
4. "Boom" (All Time Madden)
5. "Itsindgame" (EA Sports Team)
6. "Overpaid" (Bypasses Salary Cap Restrictions)

*If you create players with these names, you'll get these 6 teams!

EA's Top-Rated Madden Defenses:

1. DALLAS
2. Pittsburgh
3. San Francisco
4. Denver

Run Defense:

1. DALLAS
2. Pittsburgh
3. San Francisco
4. Denver
5. Buffalo

Pass Defense:

1. PHILADELPHIA
2. Dallas
3. San Francisco

*All ratings based on 1996 NFL statistics

CONGO BOWL





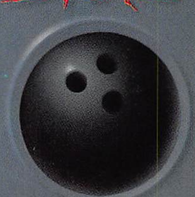




MAUI BOWL



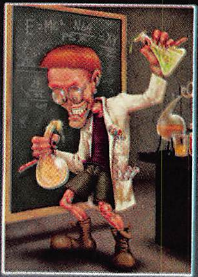
GAMEFAN SPORTS



REVIEW

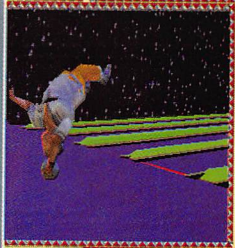
PlayStation

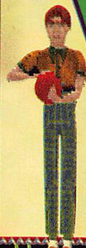
- DEVELOPER - ADRENALIN
- PUBLISHER - ASC
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-6
- DIFFICULTY - VARIABLE
- AVAILABLE - NOW



SHIDOSHI
Hey... where's the snack bar?

Ten Pin Alley

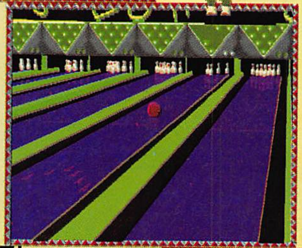


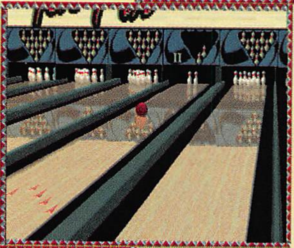


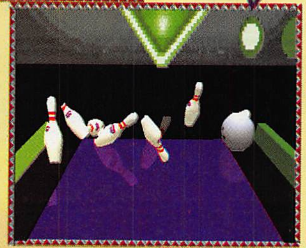














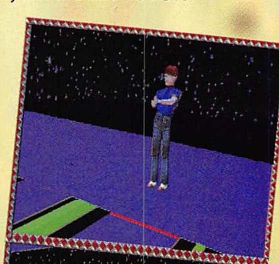
When you think sports games, bowling probably isn't the first thing that comes to your mind. But *Ten Pin Alley* is so good that the sport has finally been done justice. Most bowling games before *TPA* were rather simple, both in play mechanics and in replication of the real life sport. That's not the case here: getting a good score requires practice and skill, not just knowing where to throw to get a strike every time. You control aspects like aim, spin, power, and release point, resulting in a control system that is easy to pick up but difficult to master. The lane is equally realistic in a number of ways. *TPA* accounts for lane oil, which effects the travel of the ball, and as you play the oil wears away slowly. The biggest factor which impressed me were the pins. EACH pin has about 5,000 contact points, so that when one pin hits another, the direction and way they travel is as realistic as possible. The first time I watched *TPA* in action, I was honestly amazed. And, of course, what would bowling be without modes like team play and tournament mode, where you and five other friends can go against one another, join together on teams, or enter a tournament with up to 64 participants.

TPA, however, isn't all serious. The twelve different bowlers presented not only have their own style, but distinct personalities. Humorous real-time cut-scenes are provided in instances like missing a good shot or getting a strike. Once you've found your character of choice, you can take them into an editor where you can change things like their name, hair or outfit color, ball weight or type, and skill level. Save your favorite combination, and their lifetime scores as well as you play over time.

Ten Pin Alley is my choice for sleeper hit of the year. If you like bowling, you'll be in heaven, but if you don't, look past that. It's a fun, addicting game, and that's what matters most. S



TEN PIN ALLEY









BABY'S GOT BACK!



LOOK, I'M IN THE GAME!









PERFECT YOUR FORM... PERFECT YOUR SCORE!



NFL GameDay '97





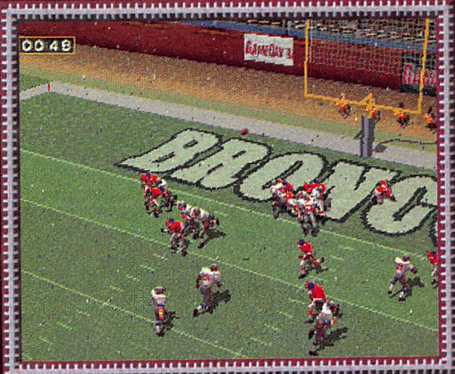




Here we go! Finally, some real competition for *Madden '97*. Yes, Sony scores big with *NFL GameDay '97*, their latest and greatest football sim for the PS. This hot game is available now, and nothin' should stop you from checking it out. Unless, of course, you'd like to read on and find out why...



Remember the amazing 3D engine driving *NCAA GameBreaker*? It's also been implemented in *GameDay '97*, and boy, does it move well. The sprite-based players are well-animated, and the game runs at a blazing 30 fps within giant, smooth, well-textured polygonal stadiums. Even when playing on the highest speed setting, the game blasts between plays, formations, options, and views, quickly and on the fly. The sound, too, has received a quality face-lift. In other words, *NFL GameDay '97* is a massive improvement over the first *GameDay*.

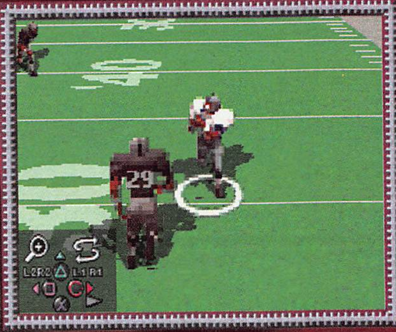


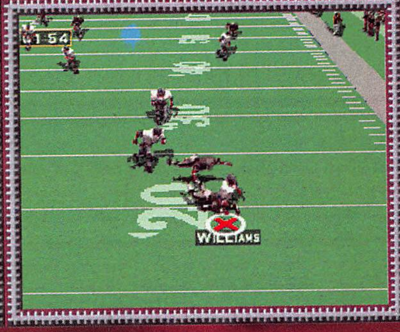


In the realm of gameplay, the computer AI has been beefed up, so certain wide-out passing plays (guaranteed plays in the first *GameDay*) are now completely covered. The controls, though, are extremely second nature and responsive, so expect pinpoint accuracy during runs and/or defensive plays. Employing all the many plays and controls ain't as difficult as it used to be, thanks to the perfectly tweaked play mechanics. The game menus and formations are also easy to work with, and, ultimately, just as easy to use.

NFL GameDay '97 has been available for a while now, but with the Super Bowl looming so closely, I felt it necessary to take a detailed look at it. After all, it's hot stuff. So if you're sick of *Madden '97* (how...?), or if you're simply looking for one of the year's best football games, *GameDay '97* is here. JS







GAMEFAN SPORTS



REVIEW

PlayStation

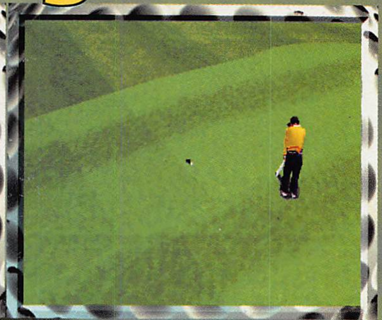
- DEVELOPER - SONY INTERACTIVE
- PUBLISHER - SONY
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-8
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - NOW



JACQUES STRAP
HARD-HITTIN' GRIDIRON FUN!!!

Get on top of your game.





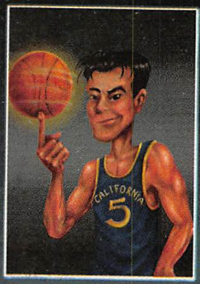
GAMEFAN SPORTS



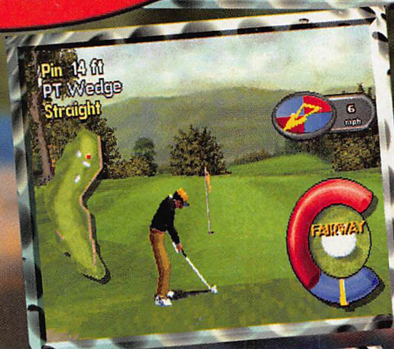
REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - GREMLIN
PUBLISHER - VR SPORTS
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-4
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOW



JOE KIDD
Nuuuuuuuu-nan, Nuuuuuuuu-nan, Noonan, Noonan, NOONAN!

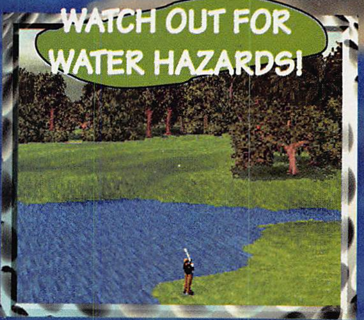


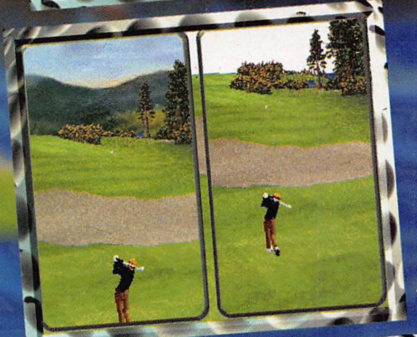


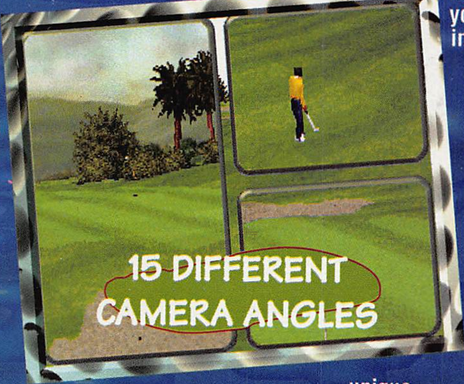


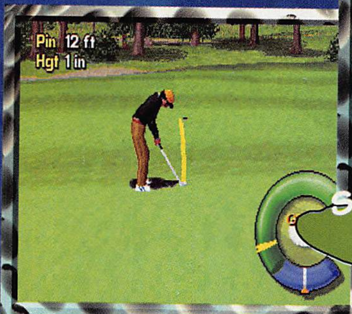
There's nothing like getting off work, going to the driving range and smacking a bucket of balls. No better way to let off some steam, and show that little white ball who's boss. Or tee-off time at 7:30 AM, lofting dew-covered divots high into the air. But who really likes getting up at 6:30 AM, when you could have gotten up at 8AM, and why spend the $6 on a bucket of balls each day, when you can simply plug in *VR Golf '97*? Choose from practice mode, strokeplay or matchplay – Skins, foursome, Fourball, AMA Tour, or Pro Tour. *VR* uses the latest technology in Virtual FieldVision which gives you access to nearly any perspective imaginable. I counted 15 different camera angles! The most unique angles were the ones with the "Into" option, which shows the ball flying right at the screen and then conversely, the angle flips as you see the ball flying away from you the moment it reaches its crescendo. You'll definitely want to take advantage of the various split-level screens that give you green close-ups, fairway lies, ball trajectory, and swingform. No longer are you just limited to just one camera shot, but now you have up to 3 at a time!

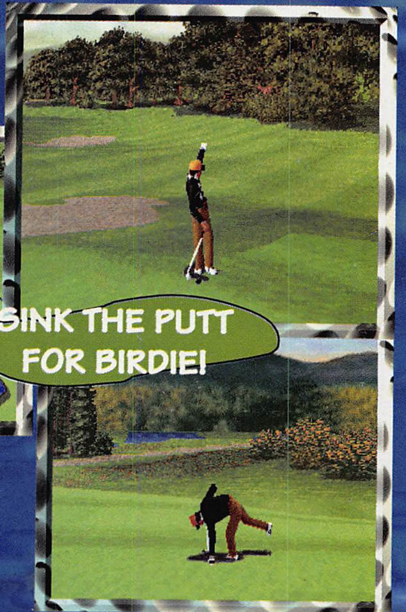
One of the things that really impressed me about their use of 3D was the contours in the course. Most of the golf games I've played are totally flat, except for the greens that have that 3D web-effect. The hills on the fairway make this game much closer to the real thing – we are of course, supposed to be playing a championship-style course, not the local muni. *VR Golf* has overall smooth gameplay, short load times and is very user friendly. Not much crowd in this one however, which diminishes the tournament atmosphere, and instead creates a more personal game. You can create your own golfers, which is good, because you won't find actual PGA players, so you'll have to create your own. The tournament does give you a pool of 20 computer players to compete against as well as 4 human players in the AMA, and a pool of 48 competing in 4 rounds of the Pro Tour. *VR Golf* definitely gets the nod, especially in their unique gameplay options, and all of the different ways they've created to view it. ***JK***

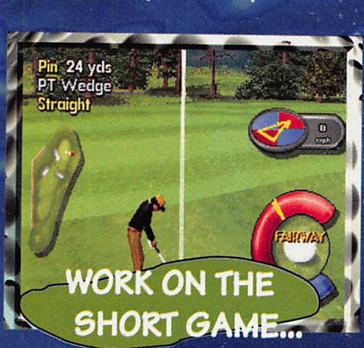


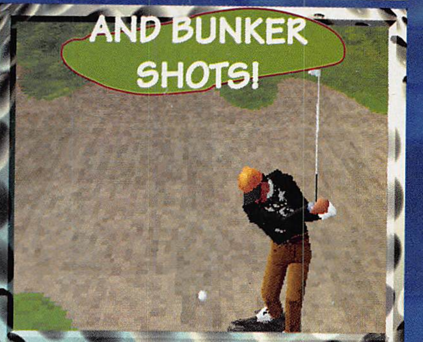














NHL 97











SHOOTOUT: Take it to the ice. Exciting one on one action to decide the game's outcome by breakaway shots on goal.

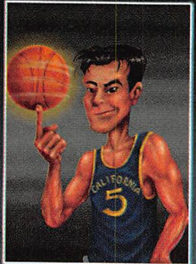


GAMEFAN SPORTS

REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - EA
- PUBLISHER - EA
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-8
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - NOW



JOE KIDD
Let's take it to the ice.

Just when you thought things were slowing down, EA blindsides us with *NHL '97*. Now, one of the fastest growing sports has a game on the Saturn to complement it. The opening music will have you pumped up for some hardcore checking, with the synthesizer jamming in the background.

You can choose between Exhibition, Season or Playoff mode, or you can opt for the wild Shootout. While Season allows you to track 8 seasons simultaneously, Shootout mode was particularly fun, because I didn't have to end in a tie to participate in the ultimate *mano y mano* competition. Speaking of 8, imagine getting 7 of your friends and plugging in for a real life rumble on ice... you can do it! The stadiums and rinks are authentic and emblazoned with home team logos. The players are 3-D polygon players animated from the movements of actual NHL'ers, but honestly, I wasn't thrilled with the player graphics. The graphics weren't bad, but spoiled sports gamers like myself have huge expectations these days; the detail in the goalie masks, however, are second to none.

Of course, with EA, everything in the real sport is included in the game: over 600 NHL players, licenses for the 26 rendered goalie masks, updated rosters, statistical accuracy, and individual player ratings. In addition, they even go so far as to bring in Fox TV's John Davidson as Hockey Night host to set the tempo for the game. Options include create and trade players, signature moves and fights, multiple player injuries and more. The overall play is smooth, but I had occasional difficulties with "Ice Compensation" control, resulting in "skate-bys."

They enhanced the play by allowing us to appreciate the game from every perspective, as '97 includes 9 different camera angles, and 11 on replays. The realism is unsurpassed as you take on the player's perspective; seeing only what he sees. EA's really developed the AI in the game, as scoring, executing strategy and defensive stands are all very logical. The true hockey fanatic will certainly appreciate

-JK















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AVKGF

NINTENDO 64 Shoshinkai Report



FEATURES

While Nintendo's future is still uncertain in Japan, the system's been a runaway success in the States, and ended up being one of the most sought-after items this holiday season (Unfortunately, it was still beaten out in the media by "Tickle Me Elmo," proving that we've still got a long way to go as a species). What's in the future for those who found an N64 under their tree? The '96 Shoshinkai, in Makuhari Japan, held the answer: The N64's still lagging in quantity, but leading in quality.

Nintendo had only three playable games on the show floor, and you can find those (Mario Kart, StarFox, Blast Corps) elsewhere in this issue. The show's most tantalizing unveilings (The 64DD, Zelda 64, Yoshi's Island 64, Mother 3 and Yuke Yuke!! Troublemakers), however, are all right here...

By Takuhi & The Enquirer











Yoshi's Island 64

Finally: The Nintendo 64's first side-scrolling adventure. While there isn't much parallax at this stage, or any *Clockwork Knight* 2D/3D effects, the colorful pre-rendered graphics are incredible (and still manage to capture the cartoony feel of the first). The play mechanics look to be basically unchanged, except that it appears that Yoshi has finally lost baby Mario. Certainly won't miss his whining.

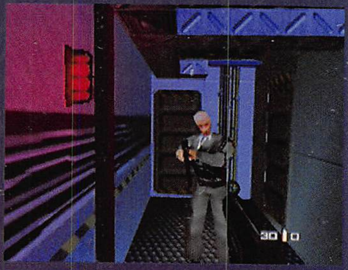
Vibration Pack

Nintendo showed a new peripheral known in Japan as the "Vibration Pack" (they're still working on the US name). It plugs into the back of your N64 controller, and when you get hit in certain games (*Blast Corps* and *StarFox* are the first two), it shakes your controller, giving you a quick blast of feedback. It costs about 12 bucks, requires 2 AA batteries, and will be released at the same time as *StarFox 64*.



Golden Eye 007

Nintendo still has Rare hard at work on this slightly overdue movie conversion. As you can see, the game has evolved tremendously since we showed the first shots a year ago. Still waiting to see those driving scenes...





NEWS

Time Crisis Update

Namco has announced the details on their GunCon controller, and that the PlayStation version of *Time Crisis* will feature a special stage exclusive to the home system.



Namco's "GunCon" plugs into both your PlayStation AND your TV, ensuring ten times the accuracy of Konami's light gun. It will be compatible only with *Time Crisis*, and it is the only gun you can use for *Time Crisis*. Accordingly, *Time Crisis* and the gun will only be sold as a set. The American version is bright yellow.

The new stage takes place in a hotel run by a new villain, Kantaris (pictured here), who's also secretly developing biological weapons. The new stage has two different routes... In one you take an elevator up to a party at the top floor, and in the other, you take the stairs to an in-hotel shopping mall. Thanks to *Time Crisis*' newly added "BRC System," the game automatically changes the player's route depending on their skill... The player will not have a choice. The new stage definitely features new textures, enemies, bosses and midbosses. *Time Crisis* ships in Japan this March.

Gumpei Yokoi Forms Own Company

Gumpei Yokoi, who left Nintendo earlier this year, has started his own company, "Koto." Rumors that his abrupt exit was due to the colossal failure of Nintendo's Virtual Boy system may be untrue, and Mr. Yokoi has suggested the possibility that future Koto projects may be released by his former employer.

"When Nintendo became a big company, we were only able to make major projects," Gumpei said. "But I had lots of other ideas. I started Koto with the hope of making products out of the ideas I've been accumulating for the last 30 years."

Koto has a staff of only 6 people, and will be designing products, not releasing them. For that purpose, Koto also has a sister company, called "Sergo." Koto currently has 6 products in development, the first of which could go into production in June of next year, according to the Japanese video game publication, DengekiOh.

What are these mystery projects? No one's saying, although Mr. Yokoi has announced flat out that they're "not N64, Saturn, or PlayStation games." But it does seem as if Koto's protects will remain in the video game industry, and one, judging by a vague description of "high level technology that was developed at the time for expensive, high level military use, that can now be used for only 100 yen [around $1]," seems to be a description of a new piece of arcade hardware. Other sources indicate that he is also developing small, electronic children's toys for mass production.

Mr. Yokoi, possibly the most famous engineer in the industry, has a great deal of confidence in the product that Koto plan to announced next year. "If it succeeds," he suggested, with a modest laugh "I could be the next Bill Gates... maybe."

Legend of Zelda 64







It's *Zelda! Zelda! Zelda!* While this fifth chapter in the series that defined the term action/RPG existed only as approximately 3 seconds of video tape, it looks to be well worth the wait. Long gone is the stumpy, Pinocchio-nosed Link render-from-hell Nintendo showed last year. Now we have an incredibly cool main character, complete with facial expressions, in a beautiful 3D environment.

All of the shots that Nintendo showed are from dungeons, and they don't seem to show any of the actual angles from the game itself, but if the game can even come close to approaching this quality, the 64DD players are gonna fly off the shelves. More shots next page!



Kirby's Air Ride

Kirby's wasn't playable at this year's Shoshinkai. Odd considering it *was* last year... This 4-player racing game should be the next major Nintendo release after *Blast Corps* and *StarFox 64*.

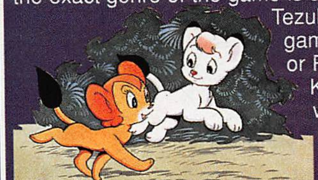


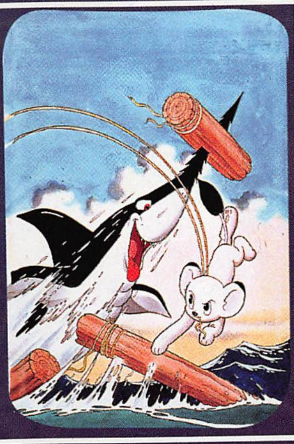




Jungle Emperor

Nintendo's sole surprise announcement at the show was that *Jungle Emperor* (Known in America as "Kimba the White Lion"), late, ultra-famous manga artist Ozamu Tezuka's most well-regarded masterpiece, will be converted into a Nintendo 64 game. While the artwork, music, and scenario will be handled by Osamu Tezuka Productions, Nintendo will be handling the programming and game design, under the watchful eye of General Producer Shigeru Miyamoto. Although it will definitely be 3D, the exact genre of the game is still unclear. A representative of Osamu Tezuka Productions stated that unlike action games, in which you only use your reflexes or RPGs in which you only use your head, Kimba will be a new type of game in which you also "use your heart." The game will be a massive 128-meg cartridge, and is due out in early 1998.





Interview

While at the show, we were fortunate enough to get a chance to speak with Perrin Kaplan, head of Nintendo's P.R. Department, and Jim Henrick, who acts as the development manager of the Tree House, while fulfilling other duties at Nintendo as well, about the future of the Nintendo 64.

GF: Let's start with some of the big questions that have been on the minds of gamers recently. When will *Zelda 64* first be shown to the public, and when will the finished product be released?

Jim Henrick: I can't tell you that. What exactly will be shown at the E3 will be determined, like it is for this show, at the last possible minute. We want to give every game every opportunity to finish. Last year for E3 we were actually burning new images on the floor of the show!

GF: *Killer Instinct Gold*?

JH: Exactly. It's too early for us to say what's going to be at E3, but it's pretty logical to assume that you're going to see interactive playable exhibits of the 64DD.

GF: I know this is a touchy subject, but what price point are you trying to reach with the 64DD? I've heard rumors of $99.

JH: It hasn't been determined yet. Manufacturing hasn't really ramped up yet, so we don't know the cost of goods. We also don't know if it's going to be packed in with anything. It seems to me that there needs to be a compelling title to make the 64DD a must-have accessory.

GF: It's *Zelda*!

JH: Is it?

GF: Of course!

JH: You know, if you like RPGs, then *Zelda* is great. But RPGs are one genre that doesn't have a very wide demographic.

GF: I think you're underestimating your own product... *Zelda* has a very good reputation.

JH: That's true. It does.

GF: OK. Moving on, is there a *Donkey Kong Country* game currently in development for the N64?

JH: Yes.

GF: And would you say it's a 1997 title?

JH: I have no idea.

GF: Is *DKC64* going to be a cartridge game or a 64DD game?

JH: I don't have any specific knowledge one way or the other at this point. All I know is that it's in development.

Perrin Kaplan: I have heard that DKC64 will be on a 128meg cartridge and not be a 64DD game.

GF: We've been hearing a lot about Project Atlantis (Nintendo's long-rumored color portable system) lately. What's the deal on that?

(continued next page)

VFIII, Last Bronx on Saturn

Sega has announced that they have begun the conversions of popular arcade titles *Virtua Fighter III* and *Last Bronx* for the Saturn. One very early shot has been shown of *Last Bronx*, AM3's 3D, weapon-based fighter, but details on *Virtua Fighter III*, such as confirmation on whether or not the home version will feature an upgrade chip, have yet to be announced. No release date has been set for either title.

BioHazard Movie Planned



Last Bronx

On December 3rd, German film production company Constantine Films announced that they had acquired the license to make a general release, feature film out of Capcom's *BioHazard* (*Resident Evil*) series.

Although storyline and casting details have not been announced, we do know that the film will be live action, with CG monsters from the game. The film's budget is a relatively high (I mean, by European standards) 20 million dollars. Constantine Films is hoping to have the movie in general release, worldwide, by the end of next year.

Excited? Here's one more tidbit for you: This is Constantine's second film, and the first was... The live-action *Street Fighter* movie! Right. Never mind.

Quick FFVII Update

Square has announced the tenth playable *Final Fantasy VII* character (possibly the last...?), a knight by the name of Sephiros. You can't tell from these pics, but this dramatic character wields a sword nearly twice his body length (and I mean height, not width).

A native of Nibleheim, the town that Cloud and Tifa called home, Sephiros left to become a soldier in Shinra's growing army. He soon gained fame as Shinra's strongest warrior, and a young Cloud looked up to him with awe. It was out of respect to him, Cloud's personal hero, that Cloud first left Nibleheim to join Shinra's army.

Sephiros' current whereabouts are unknown... Like Cloud, he seems to have left Shinra's army, but no one's sure what's happened to him since. Although it seems certain that he joins your party eventually, he might not begin (or end) the quest as Cloud's ally.

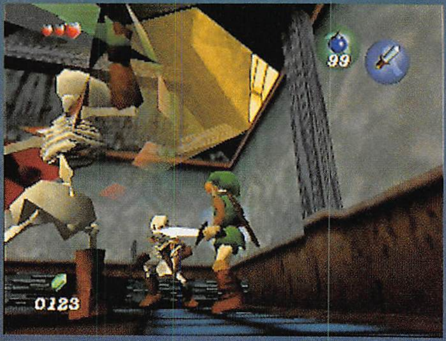
In other Square news, Square's quest to completely replace standard video game distribution channels has led to the announcement that *Bushido Blade* will be sold *only* in convenience stores. Those preordering *FFVII* at convenience stores will also receive a free strategy guide. Many convenience stores are already running HDTV movies of *FFVII* and other Square products.



Sephiros

64DD "Bulky Drive" Unveiled





Although rumors of the big introduction of the 64DD (also known as the "Bulky Drive") that was supposed to take place at this year's Shoshinkai have been flying since last year's Shoshinkai, the unveiling at Shoshinkai '96 was decidedly understated.

Four prototype 64DDs were at the show, each running one TV of a 4-TV display. A 64DD version of *Mario 64* was exhibited to the crowd; the same game as the cartridge, of course, but it served the dual purpose of highlighting the 64DD's speedy loading time (only a few seconds longer than the cartridge) and proving that the hardware was, as Nintendo claimed, basically complete.

The system plugs onto the bottom of the N64 hardware, and can play both games on discs alone, or games on disc and cartridge. *Zelda*, which we'll get back to later, is said to be packed with both a disc and a standard ROM cartridge. Why Nintendo intends to do this is still unclear, but it's possible that the cartridge will be used to contain much of the game's basic programming, while the 64DD's reported 2-4 (probably the latter) megabytes (coupled with an additional 4 from the N64 itself) will be used to store area specific information: backgrounds, enemies, music, etc. Via this combination, Nintendo could easily release expansion discs with new areas, weapons, enemies, music, etc.

Fully one half of the disc's 64 megabytes (512 megabit) can be made writable, and in this lies the 64DD's biggest distinction over its CD competitors. Nintendo President Yamauchi has been quoted as saying that this is a necessary step in the evolution of the RPG genre, although examples have been nearly non-existent. In Nintendo's Shoshinkai roundtable discussion, the topic came up only briefly, and Mr. Miyamoto's response as to how the feature would be incorporated into *Zelda* vaguely referred to a world in which semi-permanent environmental changes could occur. An example stated later in the speech was for massive save options in *Mario Paint*-type games.

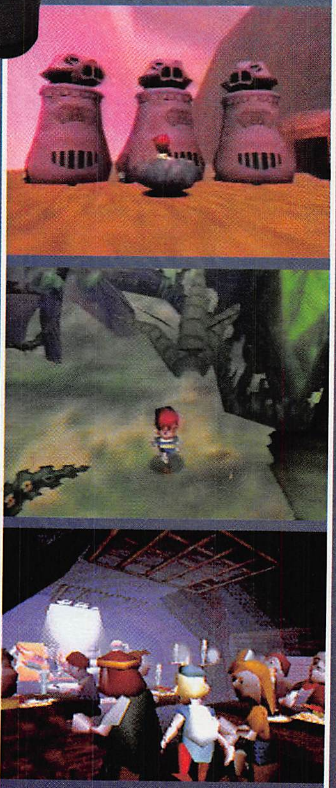
Examples in the Nintendo literature refer to more realistic and detailed characters and pets in the newly popular genre of *Wonder Project J2*-esque "rearing" games, the ability to save your performance and study it in racing games (although this ability already exists on other formats), more opportunities for character development in RPGs, and the ability to use new 64DD discs to update sports data in professionally-licensed sports titles.

Future plans include communications hardware that will allow 64DD users to download upgrades, and exchange their custom data with one another. How Nintendo plans to incorporate this is still unknown.

Statistically, the 64DD is, as Nintendo promises, fast. It can transfer an entire 64DD's worth of data in just over a minute (81 seconds), a little over 5 times as fast as a standard double-speed CD-ROM can transfer the same amount of memory. Its seek time is a low .75 milliseconds.

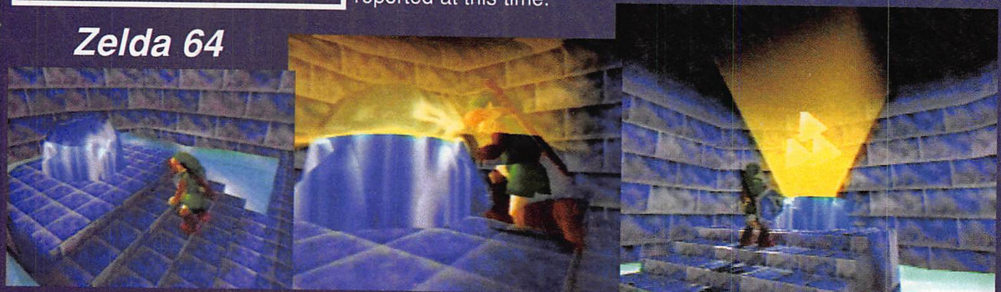
The big question, as always, is "What about the games!?" The wide-spread rumor of *Zelda* being released as a cartridge (or even on cartridge as an option) appears to be untrue. Outside of that, however, Nintendo has officially announced no titles... But unofficially, it's a different matter. In the 12-6 issue of *Famicom Tsushin*, a Nintendo rep leaked that *Super Mario RPG* and *Fire Emblem* sequels are in development for the 64DD, but that they were too early in development to be considered definite. Furthermore, the same Nintendo rep listed Nintendo's impressive-looking *Mother 3* as a 64DD title. Unconfirmed rumors of a *Mario 64* expansion, and constant speculation about *Dragon Quest VII* and future Square titles are flying, but little more than the above four titles can be responsibly reported at this time.

Mother 3



Mother is the name of Nintendo of Japan's quirky, non-violent, and incredibly popular conventional RPG series. *Mother 2* came out here as the little seen and underappreciated *Earthbound*. As fans of that game will surely recall, the *Mother* series has a reputation for pretty poor graphics, which made these stunning shots look all the more impressive. While Nintendo has said almost nothing about the game, these pictures speak volumes: we know it has racing scenes (above), polygon-rendered overhead scenes (middle), and first-person towns full of real time polygonal townsfolk (bottom). A 64DD exclusive, due out late next year.

Zelda 64



JH: Atlantis was, and is, sort of a research project for us. Of course we're interested in doing a newer handheld somewhere down the line. But right now GameBoy is still selling very well for us. Why would we want to cannibalize that market? Of course, at some point, we will have to replace it, so we're doing a lot of research to make sure it's appropriate. You know: Is it going to have a color screen? Are color screens ready to provide the kind of latency, clarity and battery life that you want to have in a handheld? So that's what Atlantis was about: research. Looking at different options and trying to see if the pieces were there to pull together a handheld that we would be happy with.

GF: So you've officially shelved the Atlantis?

PK: Yes.

GF: Is the sequel to *Mario 64* planned for a '97 release?

JH: That's really a question for Shigeru Miyamoto. There's always a *Mario* title in development.

PK: There's nothing we can say that's definitive about the *Mario 64* sequel. There so many great products to look forward to in 1997, it's hard to count!

GF: Is there a *Metroid* game in development for the Nintendo 64?

PK: You know, I heard there was a really long time ago, but I haven't heard anything that's recent.

JH: *Metroid* belongs to its creators, R&D 1, with Mr. Miruzuchi. I don't recall seeing anything on Metroid for N64.

GF: Is there a *Kid Icarus* game in development for Nintendo64?

PK: I haven't heard one thing on that game.

GF: Since Enix is not directly releasing any more titles in the U.S., will you be bringing out *Wonder Project J2* in America?

JH: Maybe. We have a lot of people over here looking at different titles and there are lots of licenses here that aren't exhibiting. But we don't know if [*Wonder Project J2*] will ever be released in the States.

GF: Namco recently announced in Japan that they are becoming a Nintendo 64 licensee. Is that the same for America?

JH: I expect we will bring them over. However, just because they signed with NCL doesn't mean they are an NOA licensee. But they could choose to do that.

GF: How many games does Nintendo aim to release for the N64 in 1997 in the US?

JH: We really don't know. We're not deadline driven on any of our games. Our whole focus is on quality, and you can see it in a lot of the games already out there. We're going to take as long as it takes to produce these games, so I can't really tell you how many titles will be available in '97. As many as are ready, really. We have some really great things in the line-up, but if Mr. Miyamoto decides *Zelda* is going to take another 6 months,

3rd Party Products

Third party support remains the Nintendo 64's biggest weakness. With only a few exceptions, notably *Yuke Yuke!! Troublemakers* and Konami's Soccer game, the Nintendo 64's Japanese 3rd party support still lacks in both quantity and quality. With Namco and Capcom both confirmed as 3rd parties, this could begin to change... Let's just hope they're not making more sports and mahjongg games.







Eltale

At this stage in development, Imagineer's *Eltale* has a bit too much pop-up and a hero with triangle feet, but it drew quite a bit of attention as the first (and only, save *Zelda*) action/RPG on the N64's release list.

Rev Limit

Seta's nearly complete *Rev Limit* was probably the best playable 3rd party game at the show... Although the graphics were about par with *Ridge Racer*, the cool weather effects, different seasons, and variety of tracks and cars make *Rev Limit* look very promising.



Dual Heroes

The N64's first 3D-fighting game was shown at the show, but the characters could only do standard punches and kicks. The backgrounds are 2D (so far), but the characters look pretty well modeled.



Goemon 5

Konami's sole action title, this long-awaited title still exists only as development system renders. The game's eclectic nature should make for a great N64 game.



64 Oozumo

Nintendo 64 sumo wrestling! Yes! I can already hear the polygon fat rippling...

The Complete List:

Acclaim Japan:
Turok (3/97)
Asmik:
Virtual Pro Wrestling (2/97)
Athena:
Pro Mahjongg Kiwame (1/97)
Banpresto:
Super Robot Spirits (?/97)
Bottoms Up:
64 Oozumo (5/97)
EA Victor:
J-League Live 64 (12/96)
Enix:
Yuke Yuke!! Troublemakers (3/97)
Epoch:
Doraemon (3/97)
Game Bank:
Hexen (1/97)
Hudson:
Power League 64 (Unknown)
Dual Heroes (Unknown)
Untitled Pro Wrestling Game (Unknown)
Bomberman 64 (Unknown)
Hagane II (Tentative) (Unknown)
Kanedaichi Shonen no Jiken (Unknown)
Human:
Human Grand Prix (12/96)
Imagineer:
Pro Baseball King (12/96)
J-League Dynamite Soccer 64 (2/97)
Mahoo Seiki Eltale (4/97)
Multi Racing Championship (6/97)
Sim City 2000 (?/97)
Rizune (?/97)
Untitled 3D Fighting Game (?/97)
Japan System Supply:
Chameleon Twist (11/97)
Cavalry Battle 3000 (11/97)
Kemco:
Blade and Barrel (12/96)
Koei:
Mahjongg 64 (Unknown)
Konami:
Mahjongg Master (12/96)
J-League Perfect Striker (12/96)
Powerful Pro baseball 4 (Spring/97)
Ganbare Goemon 5 (Unknown)
Golf Tournament '97 (Unknown)
Seta:
Rev Limit (2/97)
Wild Choppers (1/97)
Super Real Island (5/97)
St. Andrews Golf (11/96)
Thunder Go (1/97)
Morita Shogi 64 (5/97)
Tomi:
Macross [Robotech: Crystal Dreams] (5/97)
Victor Interactive:
Mission: Impossible (4/97)
Video System:
Sonic Wings Assault (5/97)
The Mahjongg 64 (Unknown)



Blade & Barrel

One of the few things Kemco's *B&B* has over Seta's *Wild Choppers* is this cool 4-player battle mode, a la *StarFox*.







Zelda is going to take another 6 months.

GF: What does EAD stand for?

JH: Entertainment Analysis Division, I think. It's a department of NCL.

GF: And what do they do? Evaluate games?

JH: We use EAD's expertise to analyze games that come in, and then provide feedback. We are kind of farming out that knowledge right now. We put a couple of people at LucasArts to help polish *Shadows of the Empire* during the last few months of development. Nintendo has a wealth of experience producing games and we want to share that as much as possible. You know: Try and maximize the utilities of Mr. Miyamoto!

GF: Is it true that Mr. Miyamoto had input on *Shadows of The Empire*?

JH: Yes he did. Quite a bit actually. NCL sent two members of staff there, Mr. Tanabe and Mr. Yamata, and we sent a couple guys from NOA. They were at LucasArts for the past couple of months working with the team, trying to provide some input. It was actually a very good, co-operative relationship. I wouldn't say that they fixed the game, but they did provide some insight into how to do things. You have to keep in mind that *Shadows* is not a Nintendo game; it's not the style of game that Mr. Miyamoto would produce. It was very difficult for him. He was trying to improve a style of game that wasn't his style. There was a still a lot of good ideas brought to the project by EAD.

GF: I have heard that Nintendo has a combo N64 and 64DD in one planned. Is this true?

JH: We haven't really made that determination yet. We haven't even started manufacturing the 64DD. If there is a cost-of-goods incentive for us to combine both units into one, then we probably will. Right now, it's just too early to tell. Let's just get the thing out the door first, you know?

GF: That reminds me. What's going on with DMA's *Body Harvest* and *Climber*?

JH: *Climber* is on hold right now. *Body Harvest* is still under development. I don't have any kind of a schedule on it right now.

GF: Does the same apply to Angel Studio's *Buggy Boogie*?

JH: I don't have a release date for BB. But I just got a preview of it about 2 weeks ago...

GF: And how is it?

JH: It looks great. Significantly different from what we saw on the reels at the E3. Actually, I was very impressed. I was surprised by what I saw. I expected that we would probably be very tight-lipped about BB, because it looks so hot.

GF: One more question. I heard that Steven Spielberg wants to do an N64 game?

PK: Sounds good.

GF: But is it true?

JH: It's difficult to comment on that. We are talking to lots of different companies right now. The launch of N64 has been very successful, and has brought a lot of people to the table.

GF: Is it also true that Steven Spielberg called Nintendo President Howard Lincoln?

PK: It's true. He called and said, "Can I get an N64 for my son, all the stores are sold out."

Yuke Yuke!! Troublemakers

Our pick for 3rd party game of the show, *Yuke Yuke!! (Go Go!!) Troublemakers* is Enix's second N64 release, a vertically/horizontally-scrolling 2D/3D game programmed by the gods at Treasure. The characters are quirky, the action is intense, and it has loads of variety. It's due out in March, and should be on its way to America only a month or two after! A treasure indeed.







WONDER PROJECT J2



Whether it's pets in *Nyanto Wanderful*, young girls in *Princess Maker*, high school girls in *Graduation*, or prospective wives in *Marriage*, a huge genre of games in which you "raise" things (usually girls) has recently emerged in Japan. One of the most critically acclaimed games of this genre was *Wonder Project J* for the Super Famicom, in which gamers take the responsibility of educating an impetuous young robot to the world's customs, and ultimately creating a savior capable of saving that world. The robot was a boy, and needless to say, *Wonder Project J* didn't exactly fly off the shelves.

Enix isn't about to make the same mistake twice. The same basic design concept was used in *Wonder Project J2*, but instead of snotty little Pino, this game's robot is a young girl by the name of Josette. She's cute! She's charming! She's bubbly! All of that, mixed with a serious famine of adventure type games (or, for that matter, games in general) on the N64 has earned *WPJ2* and its fledgling genre a great deal of attention.

Here's the storyline: Gipetto, creator of *WP1*'s Pino, had just completed Josette when he passed away. His dying words were for her to trust in a mysterious power named [your name here]. Although she can't see you, Josette is aware of a mysterious power watching her, and comes right up to the screen to converse with you. You can't converse directly, but you can guide her with simple yes or no commands sent through her robot friend, Bird. She trusts you completely (pretty much), and so the two of you share the responsibility of saving the continent of Blue Land. It's a cool concept, and if you play *Wonder Project J2* late at night, after having consumed just the right amount of prescription cough syrup, you might actually find yourself believing that there really is a 2D universe in that cartridge that you're going to have to save.



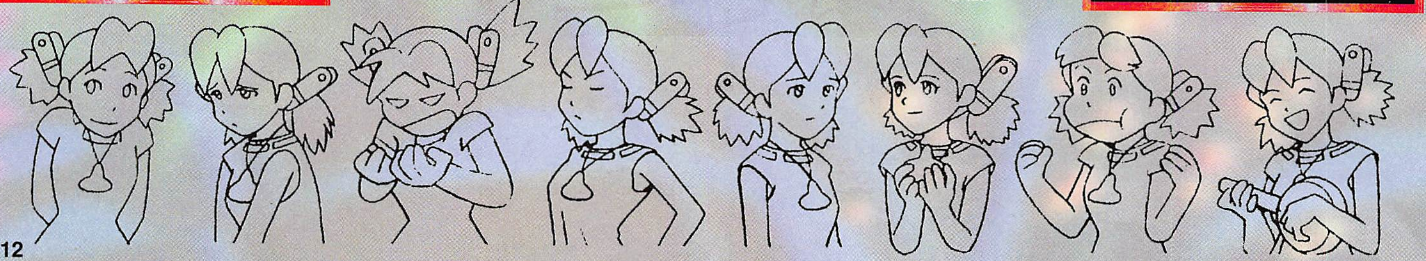
One thing's for sure: characters don't get much cooler than Josette. She's easily the most animated character in the history of video games, and the luscious, film-quality animation follows her through hundreds of different actions, from kicking cats to dancing with glee to eating her own hands. And she's certainly not lacking in personality. Generally ultra-happy but occasionally moody, you actually do empathize with Josette as a person when she first comes to understand the concept of death (and bursts into tears), or celebrates any of her many victories at cooking, acting, dancing, whatever. She even runs up to the screen frequently to ask *you* questions ("Are you handsome? Are you my age? Do you ever feel an unseen presence watching you? Do you ever feel like dancing?"). I love this aspect of the game, though I've got to say that there's something really disconcerting (but cool) about having a video game character ask you if you believe in God...

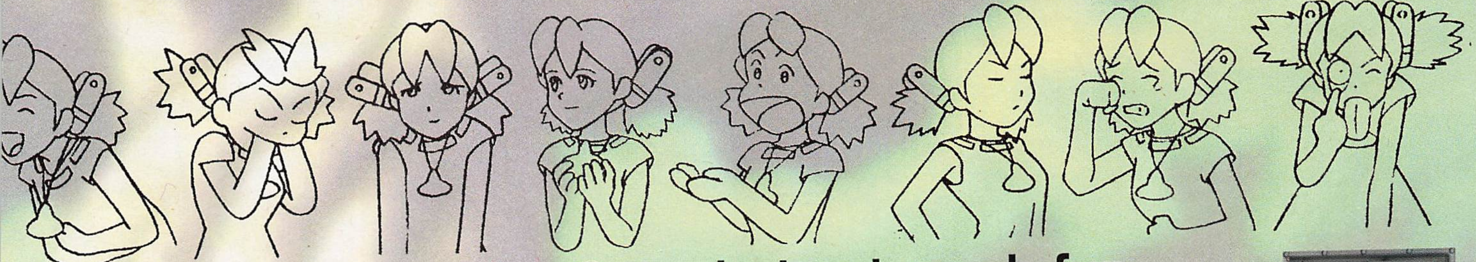


Things aren't all smiles and happy thoughts in Blue Land. The ruling Siliconian empire becomes more and more corrupt with power as time goes on, and as Josette learns about justice, she has no choice but to rebel against their growing corruption. But, hey, we're getting ahead of ourselves here. When Josette gets off the boat in Blue Land, she lacks the balance skills necessary to walk without falling, has not the social skills necessary to simply greet someone, and has no abilities that can be turned into a source of income. You've got a lot of work to do before the little 0% in the bottom of the screen becomes a 100%, and Josette becomes a complete human being.

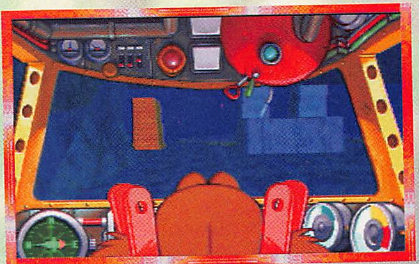
Let's say you want Josette to learn how to cook. First, you'll need to have Bird point her to the shop where she can buy a pan, and then make her practice using it. At first she'll try kicking it, carrying it on her head, eating it, that sort of thing... You'll need to hit that green "no" button to reprimand her until she gets it right. When she hits upon it, the blue button gives her the thumbs-up, and she giggles with



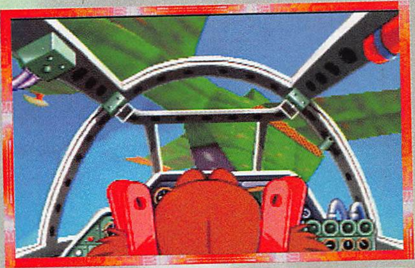




The 3D scenes... Cute, but not much fun.







Developer:
Givlo
Publisher:
Enix
Released:
11/24/96

64 meg





To buy the items necessary for use as teaching examples, you'll have to put Josette to work. Working the mine is ridiculously lucrative... Forget the other five jobs, and sign up for this one as soon as Josette's able.



After learning of "table talk" role playing games, Josette offers to take you on a spoken adventure, where you answer yes or no to the various options, and she acts out the part of your character. Tell me that's not cool.



Josette dreamed of being an actress, and worked hard to get the part. But on the film's opening day, the Siliconian Empire labels the film as "subservice," and arrests the director. Although this aspect of the storyline is slow to develop, it's incredibly important... It won't be long before sweet Josette has to fight for the values you've taught her. . .

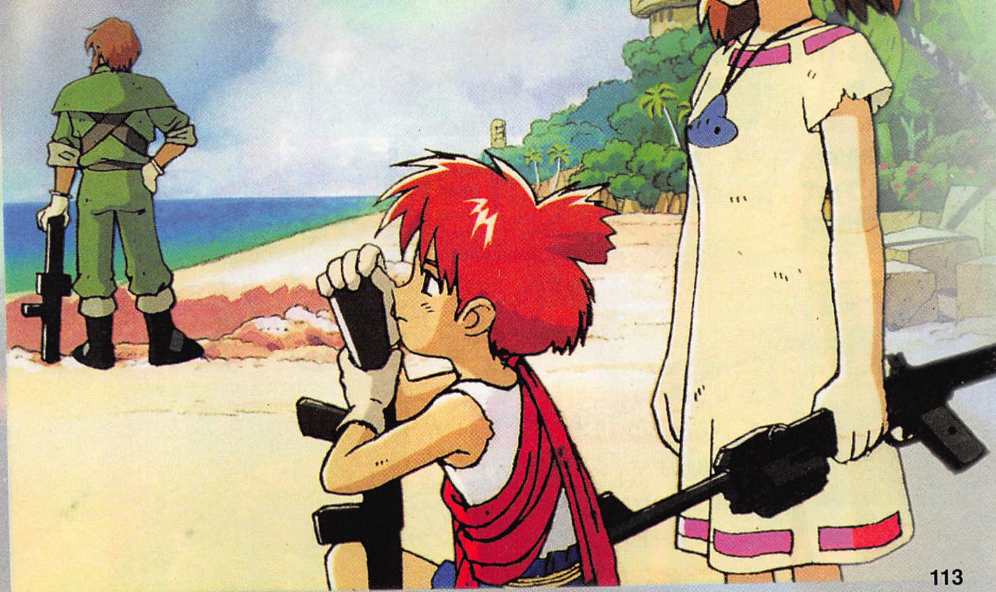
delight. Now buy her a book on cooking, show her to the stove, and have her practice. Now she can cook... sort of... but the food she prepares at her restaurant job causes her boss to vomit. A bad sign. It appears Josette does not yet understand taste, so you must make her eat various spices until she can get that concept down. Once she masters it, she's 4% closer to being a real person.

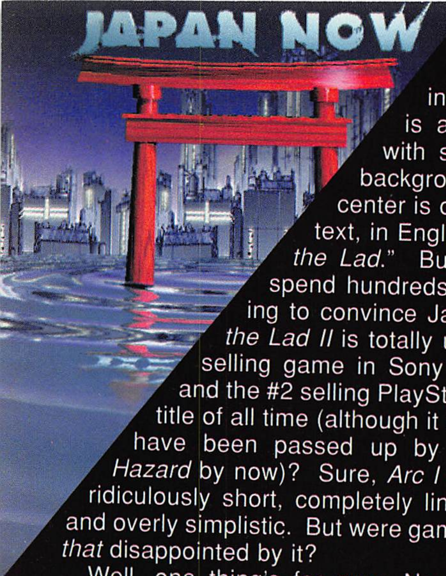


Why do a side view "communication adventure" on the Nintendo 64? The obvious reason seems to be the animation... A Josette with that many frames would take a lot of loading off of a CD. Enix also claims that the 64-bit processor allows her a very complicated artificial intelligence program, but she doesn't behave fundamentally different from the way Pino did in the 16-bit original. Other than that, the N64 is used to create a number of dreadful 3D scenes the game would be better off without. These slow and violently letterboxed scenes are fun at first, but having to search for items in the landmark-free underwater and underground scenes is tedious and incredibly frustrating.

Wonder Project J2 has a few other problems. Too many of the problems are simply solved by having Josette buy a product and practice with it at home, as if the producers couldn't think of enough real puzzles. And when you're stuck in this game, you're completely screwed. My Josette is 80% human, but there's no one left in the town to talk to and absolutely no indication of what needs to be done next to pick up those last 20 percentage points. I do respect the game's non-linear approach — you can learn things in virtually any order, but this is a problem that needs to be corrected.

In the end, I did enjoy *Wonder Project J2* immensely. Not because the quest was particularly well done, but for the sheer novelty of it and, most of all, because of Josette. I almost feel guilty for abandoning her in that 80% finished cartridge, and I can't help but turn it on and visit with her once in a while. Sure, go ahead and mock me. I understand. But if *J2* ever comes out here (Enix passed, but Nintendo's looking into it) I know that you'll come to feel the same. *T*



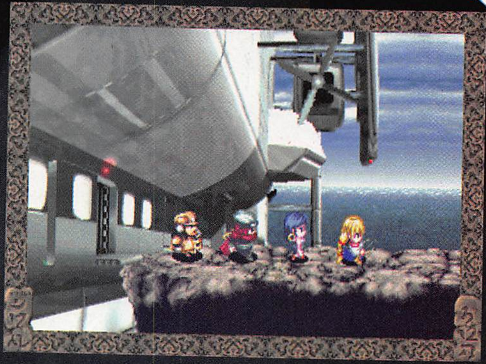


The Japanese print advertising campaign for *Arc the Lad II* is as follows: a 2-page spread with some dramatic image in the background, and smack-dab in the center is one single line of promotional text, in English... "*Arc the Lad II* Isn't *Arc the Lad*." But... why? Why would Sony spend hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to convince Japanese consumers that *Arc the Lad II* is totally unlike *Arc the Lad*, the best-selling game in Sony history and the #2 selling PlayStation title of all time (although it may have been passed up by *Bio Hazard* by now)? Sure, *Arc I* was ridiculously short, completely linear, and overly simplistic. But were gamers *that* disappointed by it?

Well, one thing's for sure: No one can accuse Sony of false advertising. Though *Arc II* is an excellent sequel in terms of cleaning up, clarifying, and intensifying *Arc I*'s storyline, it's a very different game. *Arc II* excels in length, substance, storyline, and complexity – all the areas in which the original lagged. Even more drastic is the change in genre: *Arc I* was a simple fantasy-based strategy game, but its sequel is a true RPG complete with shops, overworld maps, massive towns, non-linear elements, and an epic quest that dwarfs the original's by far.







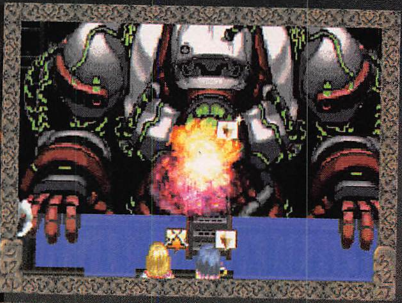
The hero this time around is Elk, one of a number of children born with magical powers that was abducted by his country's corrupt government and experimented upon. Now free (though afflicted with amnesia), he's working as a bounty hunter, until one of his jobs forces him to cross paths with his past tormenters.

Meanwhile, Arc and his crew are viewed in Elk's country as vile terrorists from another land, an interesting plot twist that pits *Arc I*'s hero and *Arc II*'s hero on opposite sides of the fence. Eventually, of course, they team up, and you end up with a grand total of 14 characters at your disposal... Plus one or two hidden ones, and whatever monsters Elk's companion Liza can lure over to your side.

The storyline is incredibly well done. *Arc*'s fascinating semi-future, semi-past universe that we saw so precious little of in *Arc 1* is now exploited to its full potential, and gives rise to both the involving *X-Files*-esque plot and a number of intricate subplots. You also have to give them credit for actually making an actual sequel for once... It's not one of those "1,000 years later" deals that seem to infect every major RPG series.

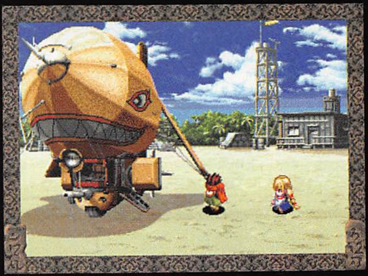
Arc's world is huge and diverse, and the game is easily 2 or 3















times longer than the original. The endless string of large, strategic battle maps is over: *Arc II* has real dungeons, huge towns, and somewhat complex mazes, all filled with an endless string of small scale battles. Although I enjoy the RPG-emphasis this time around, the limited number of characters you can use in each battle (only 5) cuts into what little strategy *Arc I* actually had. The producers were probably trying to save memory by reducing the number of characters, and in return, the new characters have incredible animation, more voice samples, and more attack patterns than their *Arc I* counterparts (who remain basically unchanged in *Arc II*). They can also use a variety of different weapons (all of which can be leveled up a number of times), now purchasable at the shops that are new to *Arc II*. The added sounds and animation are certainly nice, but the battles do become a bit tedious this time around, especially when you're forced to fight the same one twice in a row if you accidentally backtrack too far.









In terms of background graphics, *Arc II* rarely exceeds *Arc I* in terms of quality. But in terms of quantity, there's no comparison: *Arc II* probably has over ten times as many screens as its predecessor. Musically, I was slightly disappointed that *Arc II* reused so much of *Arc I*'s music: Of the new music, some is quite good, but most of it lacks the impact of the original.

Arc II is certainly not without its faults, but the way G-Craft managed to completely repair every major flaw of the original is very impressive. Though the slogan may not be so catchy, *Arc the Lad II* really isn't *Arc the Lad*. *Arc I* was a graphical and aural masterpiece, but completely lacking in substance. *Arc II* was made with the hopes of putting that reputation behind it, and achieving a place among such PlayStation fantasy-RPG classics as *Suikoden*, *Final Fantasy VII*, and *Wild Arms* (hopefully). And at that, it's an unqualified success. **T**

PlayStation

Developer: G-Craft

Publisher: SCEJ

Released: 11/01/96



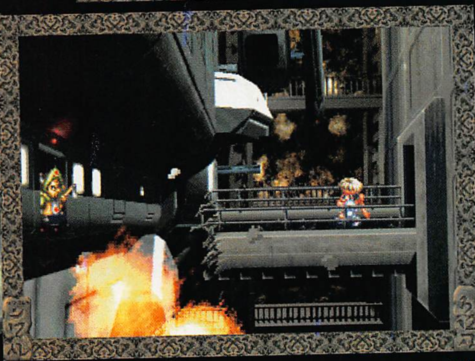
Takuhi



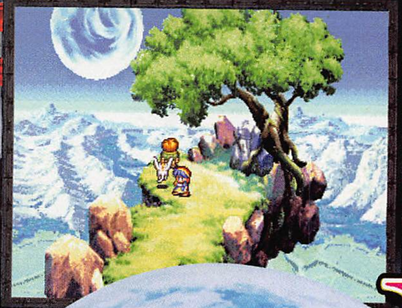


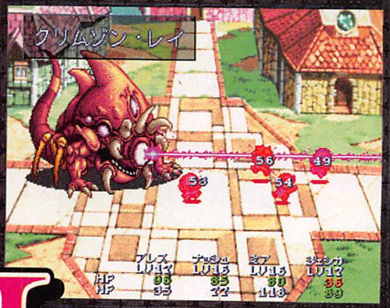
















LUNAR
SILVER STAR STORY

GameArts, it seems, was never really satisfied with the Sega-CD *Lunar*. Anyone who's seen the original design sketches, and heard all of the early hype the game generated would probably agree that, masterpiece though it may have been, *Lunar* never lived up to its full potential.

But now the game has experienced a rebirth (considering how drastically different it really is, the word "remake" seems unable to do it justice), a new attempt for GameArts to tell the story they were trying to tell the first time around, this time with 32-bit graphics, generous helpings of animation, a new soundtrack, and a storyline far deeper than the merely surface-scratching original. Though the basic storyline, systems, characters and locations are the same, *Lunar* is a completely new game, just as fun for fans of the original (if not more so) as it is for first time gamers.

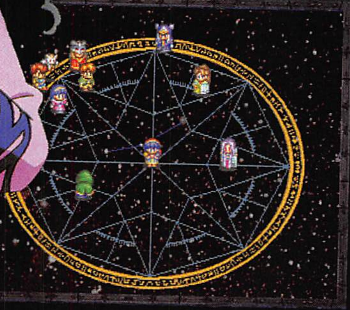
In fact, *Lunar: Silver Star Story* seems to be designed specifically to appeal to the fans of its predecessor, *Lunar: The Silver Star*... The game delights in trying to trick you into thinking it's following the path of the original, and then pulling a last minute 180-degree turn. In the original, do you remember the touching, dramatic scene in which Alex and crew prepare to board the boat to Meribia, and Luna announces that she's decided to return alone to Burg? The same thing happens in *Silver Star Story*, except this time, as the boat pulls away, Luna jumps aboard at the last minute, grabbing Alex' outstretched hand. It's an even more dramatic moment, and a relatively drastic change in the storyline.



The game is full of drastic changes. Nearly every dungeon in *Silver Star Story* is drastically changed from the original, or brand new. Most of the duller dungeons from *Lunar* have been scrapped entirely. All the towns are pretty much the same, but their events play out much differently. And the characters, which were hollow shells with only traces of personality in the original, are now as fully realized and complex as the characters in *Eternal Blue*. The battles and enemies have been completely redrawn, and most of the

























spells are new, although there are fewer than there were in the original. Finally, the game's cast of villains has been increased by two.

The game's 35 minutes of animation (all of it incredibly high quality) is astounding. Although only half screen, the FMV is clear and clean, and the frame rate is obscenely high. Clearly, GameArts plunked a lot of money into this one. The music is good, and 100% new, with virtually no connection to the original. The style of quiet, simple and elegant compositions differ sharply from *Eternal Blue*'s dramatic, brassy, big band feel... As *Silver Star Story* shows, *Lunar* composer Nariyuki Iwadare is clearly talented at both.

While the battle backgrounds and enemy animation are quite impressive, JAM (the game's actual programmers) could have put much more work in the graphics, which range widely from the impressive water and fire effects in the later dungeons to the straight-out-of-16-bit looking towns and overhead maps. Also, the loading time before battles is slightly annoying... Nowhere near as bad as it was in, say, *Albert Odyssey Gaiden*, but I've seen better. I like that all random encounters on the main world map have been removed, but the concept of being able to see your enemies doesn't quite work as well as it should... The enemies are too fast, and too difficult to evade.

Still, a few annoyances aside, *Silver Star Story* is finally the epic it always should have been. If you're a *Lunar* fan, this is a version you must experience. And for those new to the series, if the concept of old fashioned-style RPGs with an unprecedented emphasis on storyline, character development and high drama appeals to you, there's no better introduction to the world of *Lunar*.

Developer:
GameArts/JAM
Publisher:
GameArts
Released:
10/25/96


Takuhi









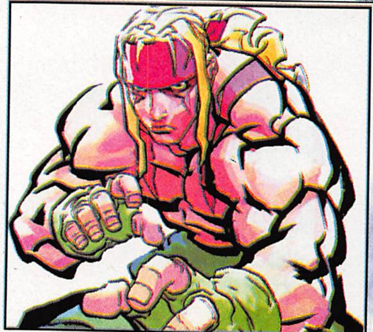






STREET FIGHTER III NEW GENERATION





Capcom has finally released the first official *SFIII* screenshots, along with a smattering of information about the game. First we'll discuss the game system. The biggest addition is called "Blocking." If you're wondering what I'm talking about, let me give you a little background: In Japan, blocking is known as "Guarding." Therefore, a technique called Blocking actually sounds original to Japanese. At any rate, Blocking blows the opponent's attack back and sometimes leaves them open for a counterattack. No word yet on how Blocking is done. Each character has three Super Arts, which are selected before the match. Apparently, you can only select one Super Art to use, and its number, either "I," "II" or "III," is displayed above your life bar. *NightWarriors*-style dashing is now possible and there is no word yet on the combo system. The name of one new character, the female ninja, was revealed as well: Ibuki. Let's recap everything we know about *SFIII*:

- The game's official title is *Street Fighter III: New Generation* and runs on Capcom's new CD-based CPSIII 2-D hardware.
- Ten selectable characters: Ryu, Ken, Yun and his brother (?) (kung-fu masters), Ibuki (a female ninja), Alex (a scarred white man), Dudley (a black boxer), Sean (another Shotokan hero), Elena (a black girl), an emaciated freak, and an electrified dude. No word yet on bosses.
- The backgrounds shown include Japanese hot springs, a cave, a Hong Kong street, a rustic village, a subway, a London street, a bridge overlooking a quaint Japanese town, a graffitied wall and a Chinese-style fighting arena.
- In addition to life and super bars, there is a mystery bar under the life bars. This may be a dizzy bar.
- Dashing is now possible.
- Backgrounds scroll vertically as well as horizontally.
- When you perform a Super Art, the backgrounds momentarily change into warping, color-cycling insanity as in *Red Earth/Warzard.*
- Ryu has two new supers: Shin Shoryuken, or True Shoryuken, and Raijin Hadoken, or Lightning Blade Hadoken.
- Ken has one new super: Shippu Jinrai Kyaku, or Gale Lightning Kick.



Can the Street Fighter series rewrite video game history again?





The current rumor is that *SFIII* is due in February/March, but we'll keep you updated!





No, this is not an Alpha Counter!!



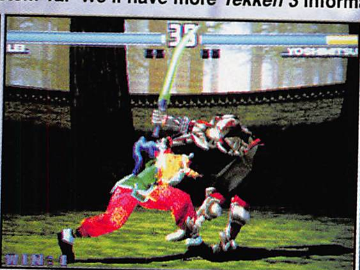
TEKKEN 3

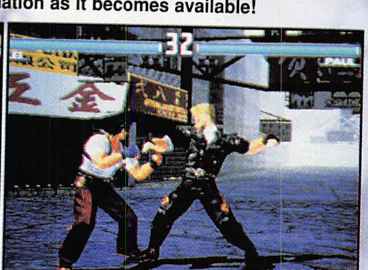
Namco has finally released the first official *Tekken 3* information, and it's amazing! The storyline takes place 19 years after *Tekken 2*. Apparently, Jun Kazama won the King of Iron Fist 2 tournament, and, in the process, was somehow impregnated by Devil Kazuya. Er... No, I guess I don't really want to know how that happened. Immaculate conception or not, Jun gives birth to Kazuya's son, who she names Jin. His grandfather, Heihachi, realizes that a mysterious, living power called "Toshin" or "Fighting God" exists in Jin, and when Jin turns 15 he begins to train him. Four years later, The King of Iron Fist Tournament 3 is called, and the 19-year-old Jin enters.

Since *Tekken 3* takes place nearly two decades after *2*, all of the returning characters are extremely old. For instance, Paul Phoenix is now 46, Lei Woolong is 45, Law is 46, and King is 51. Evidently, these five characters plus the seemingly ageless Yoshimitsu are the only characters to return... all the rest will be new. Gameplay details are non-existent, but from these shots we can infer that some stages have actual walls, *Fighting Vipers*-style. There's still no word on the hardware, (other than that it's definitely not System 11) either, but rumors point to an upgraded version of System 11 called System 12. We'll have more *Tekken 3* information as it becomes available!

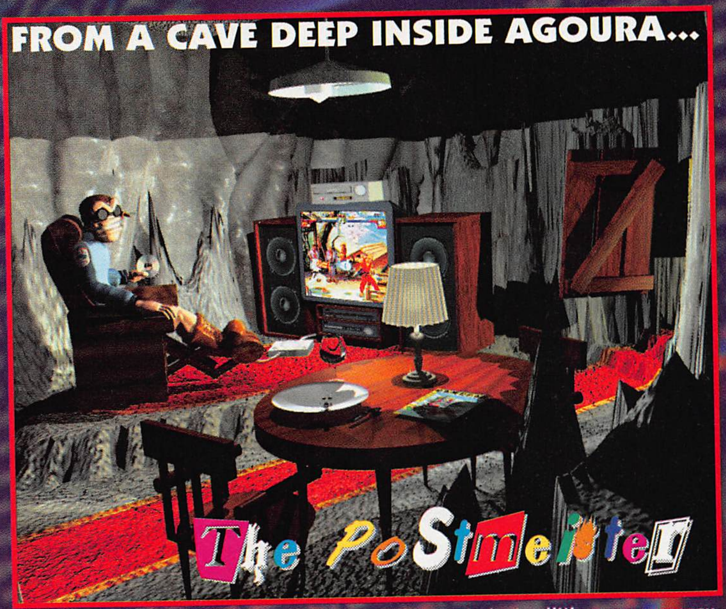












Loyal Postie readers may notice that my column is just a little eensy-weensy smidgen smaller than it was last month. Evidently the powers that be decided that "the readers" don't want to listen to a deformed public servant rant for 600 words about how he had to eat water buffalo dung to survive in 'Nam. No! These "readers" want to see pictures of something called "The Streetfighter 3" and "Teckin' III" or some such nonsense. More of those new-fangled fighting games, I gather. In my heart, there's only room for that Genesis masterpiece, Budokan. Anyway, on to our two lucky letter writers:

I've never actually written any magazine before, so I chose my first one to be for the coolest mag in town.
1) There are a lot of PO'd gamers in this universe since the release of *Destruction Derby 2*. The game is cool, don't get me wrong, but not as good as the first. Why, you ask, would I say that? Three words: NO LINK MODE. Why on Earth was this left out?
2) I own an import PlayStation (yes, I paid a fortune for it) and I would like to know if *Tomb Raider*, *Pandemonium*, *2Xtreme*, and other cool American games will ever make it overseas? Betcha never thought anyone would ever ask that! I know *Crash Bandicoot* is on its way, but I already have 100% complete. Oh well.
3) Your mag has the best import game coverage, any chance you can expand on that?
4) That N64 has left a bad taste in my mouth. I smell Jaguars and Neo•Geo carts in the future. A cart and floppy disk system is, in my opinion, a joke. *Wave Race* is an exceptional game, but *Mario*, *Gretzky*, and *KI Gold* are hardly worth $80 a pop. Sorry Nintendo, but Sony and Sega have the right idea. Even the inevitable M2 was smart enough to choose CD for a format.
5) Finally, I have noticed a huge lack of new Saturn titles. Why is that? Sega has a great system, they need more hot titles, and I don't mean more Sony hand-me-downs. I hope Saturn does better, with better competition for Sony. Reason being, stiffer competition means better games. If Saturn fails, who will Sony compete with? Nintendo? Ha ha ha! Oooh! *MK Trilogy* really scares me. Heh heh. Sorry, didn't mean to open any N64 wounds.
Danny Varajas II
Euless, TX

*1) I have bad news... Link mode is *DEAD*. It's not just* DD2*, all of us here were shocked that* Rage Racer *had *NO* link-up. What's that all about!? Since Namco started the whole link-up thing, it's probably that when they abandon it, everyone else will too. There just weren't enough people who used it, companies say. Piffle.*
2) It's always fun for me to watch American games get twisted when they're exported across the Atlantic... Crash Bandicoot *has a new render for ads and stuff (he's much cuter, and a bit more deranged looking now), and the Japanese version has totally new music. The Japanese art for* Tomb Raider*, which is* Tomb Raiders *in Japan, is unbelievably BAD. I guess they're retaliating against us for screwing up so much of the art in their games. Lara has been re-rendered in all of the game's CG, too.* 2XTreme *and* Pandemonium *are both on their way, too, but I haven't heard about any changes.*
3) Yeah, sure, they can take this page! Leave me with NOTHING! Those vultures! Next thing you know I'll be stuck with, like, two sentences worth of a column down in the small print on page 1, after the copyright notices and subscription information. I deserve better! I'm a veteran! I fought the Kaiser and all of his Jerries in the BIG ONE, pal! I had to eat my own horse just to SURVIVE!
4) Well, if sales receipts are any indication, you're definitely in the minority opinion there.
5) Wow, you can start a charity organization: "PlayStation Owners for Sega." While I think Nintendo's perfectly capable of providing Sony some tough competition, I otherwise completely agree... I love people who write in to say "SONY ROCKS! THEY'LL CRUSH SEGA LIKE THEY'RE BUGS AND CONQUER THE WORLD! HA HA HA HA!" Yeah! And then they'll jack up prices, crush the unproductive niche genres, and never upgrade their hardware. If we didn't have such heated competition in the game industry, we'd all still be paying $700 for 3DOs.

Dear Postman meister person,
I saw the last paragraph in Postmeister, 12/96 issue, when you said "A brief note to readers: It's not that I only publish letters about RPGs and *Sailor Moon*, it's that that's all I GET."
Well, Postie, I got news for you! I HATE RPGs! THEY SUCK AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE BIG DEAL IS! The major reason I despise RPGs is the fact that when you encounter an enemy, one always has to do all those commands in a letter set-up sequence. One major reason I like *Zelda* is the fact that the player is in direct contact with the enemy; no little spell-casting sessions to go into, just see it and kill it. And if one really thinks about all games, aren't you always playing the role of a character, whether it's a fighter or magician or robot or race car driver, etc? Think people, THINK! What's the purpose of moving little people across and up and down a screen only to have to go into a totally boring scene to defeat an enemy? Does anyone comprehend what I'm saying?
Chris Jones
Flossmore, IL
P.S. Why are the PlayStation and Super Famicom sometimes abbreviated as PS-X and SFC?

Sigh... that's the last time I try to start any controversy. That letter drew the typical Postmeister response of 8 billion people 'for' RPGs, and only Chris here 'against'. The Sailor Moon *side drew about 30 billion trillion zillion letters 'for' the show (including Chris, sorry I had to edit that part), and none 'against.'*
So here's my question... Are we all insane? All of us? I mean, Sailor Moon *got canceled because the conventional wisdom is that most people hate "all that big eye Japanese stuff." And RPGs never come out here because they say that Americans just can't stand slower paced games. But RPGs and* Sailor Moon *seem to be just about all the Postreaders care about! So, what's wrong with all of us? I mean, I took a slug in the pre-frontal lobe when I was fighting for my country down in Gettysburg, but what's your excuse? You're all deviants! Deviants!*
Oh, and when Sony was considering first releasing the PlayStation, they thought that name made it sound too much like a toy, so they were going to call it PS-X. Even though they decided against it, it stuck. And SFC = Super Family Computer.

Write to me or I'll run for President!

The Postmeister
5137 Clareton Dr. Suite 210
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

ADVERTISER'S INDEX



Capcom's 1997 arcade line-up.
First, the game that everyone's been waiting for: *Street Fighter 3: The New Generation*, which you can read about in our last-minute update. Next up is *DarkStalkers 3*, which will debut at the February AOU show in Japan. Huitzil and Donovan (in his current form) have been taken out of the sequel, but there will be at least two new characters. *DS3* will not use Capcom's new CPSIII hardware but the old, cost efficient CPSII.

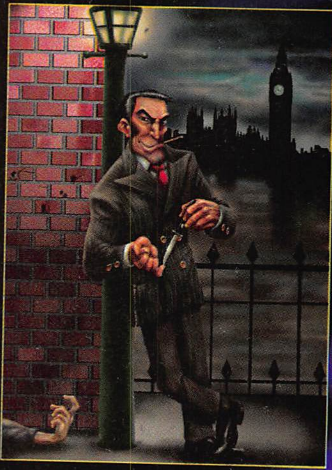
Square to make their own hardware?
Sources at Square of Japan have leaked some major info that will blow your minds!! At the Shoshinkai last month a friend of mine from Square was talking to me about the problems that Matsushita has been having with the M2. Well, the first problem is that the machine does not meet the projected specs of 1 million polygons at 60 frames. 250,000 at 60 frames with all features is closer to the truth. He also told me that the same team who designed the M2 is almost finished on another piece of hardware! This machine is still not scheduled to be finished for another 6 months, but it's supposed to be better than both the M2 and N64! This machine will be able to pump out 500,000 at 60 frames with all features, but that's not all. Apparently, Square is considering producing all their games exclusively for this new hardware! I know this sounds ludicrous, but my source is very tight with the president of Square! Don't be surprised if you see this machine at the end of 1998 with the Square label on it!!!

Mortal Kombat 4 Update
Well, the most noticeable change in the schedule is that *MK4* will not be released in April as previously suggested. The date has been pushed back to June of 1997 to coincide with the sequel to the *MK* movie. There are now 3 different levels of combos: air juggles, simple combos (short combos), and professional combos. Ed Boon told me that *MK4* will not feature any of *MK*'s trademark cartoon finishing moves (Fatalities, Babalities, etc.) because he wanted the game to be much darker and scarier. *MK4* uses new hardware, and the characters are all displayed in real-time 3D, with approximately 2,800 to 3,800 polygons used per character per second at 60 frames! The only four characters returning from previous *MK*s are Rayden, Scorpion, Sub-Zero, and Liu Kang. The rest of the cast (which consists of 12 playable characters right now), is being made up of entirely new fighters. All of the backgrounds are now in real-time 3D, with no ring-outs, and you'll recognize some of the old *MK* arenas, such as Goro's Lair. *MK4* is currently about 30% to 40% complete, and we should see home versions sometime in 1997 or 1998.

Crystal Dynamics, still making games?
Yes it's true. CD has 2 new games planned for 1997 and they are both sequels: *Gex 2* and *Pandemonium 2*. *Gex 2* will be a real-time 3D adventure like *Mario 64*, while nothing is known about *Pandemonium 2* yet. Both titles are exclusively for PlayStation, and should appear sometime in 1997.

Kemco's Top Gear Rally
Top Gear Rally is currently about 50% complete as we speak. The game has 7 to 8 different tracks with around 10 different vehicles to choose from (including one secret car that can be accessed through a code). There's also a 2 player mode that runs at the same frame rate as the single player game, 30fps. We should have actual shots of *Top Gear Rally* in the March issue of GameFan, and if possible we'll be be bringing you an interview with BMG, the designers of the game. *TGR* will be finished sometime in the 2nd quarter of 1997.

UNTIL NEXT TIME...



WHAT'RE YOU STARING AT, MY SON? THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF EUROPA, THAT'S WHAT! I'M THE GUVNOR, AND WHAT I SAY GOES, RIGHT!



YOU'RE MY PAL!

As mentioned last issue, one of the big concerns for UK Nintendo fans awaiting the N64's launch on March 1st is how well the games will be adapted to work on the PAL TV system. On the Super NES, British gamers had to endure shoddy conversions that not only ran slower than their US and Japanese counterparts, but also had large black borders at the top and bottom of the screen. Ugh.

Fortunately, however, advance word is good. THE Games, Nintendo's UK distributor, recently received their first test machines and an early PAL version of *Super Mario 64*. And not only has the game been optimized so that it runs at almost exactly the same speed as the US version, the infamous borders, although still present, are less than half the size of the Super NES ones, i.e. barely noticeable. And rumor has it that the *PilotWings 64* conversion is equally impressive. Like *SM64* the game speed is almost identical to the NTSC versions, and although it is said to have slightly larger borders, the viewfield has been widened to create a 'Cinemascope'-style effect.

Incidentally, you might be interested to know that UK Super NES games, when put through a suitable game converter, run faster on US systems. And the same is likely to be true of N64 games. Hmm, anyone fancy a hyper-speed *Mario 64*...?

TERRA-FIED!

Compared to the Super NES market in the US, the UK and European markets are very small. So small, in fact, that SquareSoft didn't even bother converting *Super Mario RPG* on the PAL TV system. Bah! However, at long last, we're getting a game that you won't. Ha! Called *Terranigma*, the game was originally published in Japan some months ago by Enix, and created by Quintet, the legendary company who brought us *Soulblader* and *Actraiser*.

As you might guess, it's an RPG which looks and feels very similar to Quintet's excellent *Illusion Of Gaia*, its predecessor in Quintet's world-creating action/RPG series. The player assumes the role of a mischievous lad who, after opening a forbidden door, discovers that his own world is situated in the Earth's interior, and that an evil force has frozen the entire population of the planet above. Now it's up to the player to challenge the forces of darkness and restore human life to its former glory.

Given the game's pedigree, it's no surprise that *Terranigma* is a superb game, full of action, intrigue and wonderful graphics. If you're an RPG nut with a converter, then you should seek this out at your local game importer right now.









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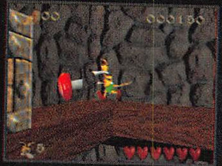
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BLACK DAWN
POWERSLAVE
RACING:
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STRATEGY:
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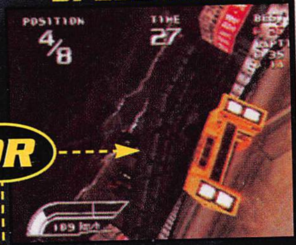
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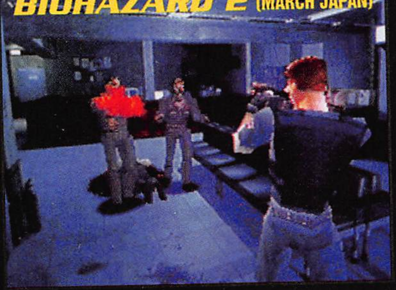


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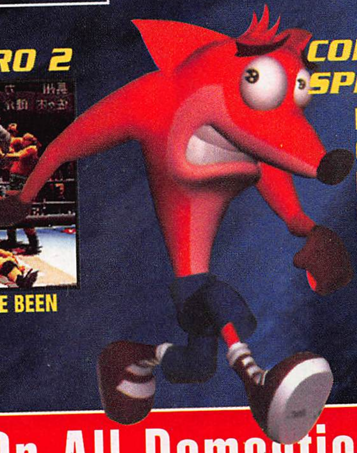


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